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Better still, because BT is building for the net generation, we'll always be around to help.

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BT Internet

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Flick before you click

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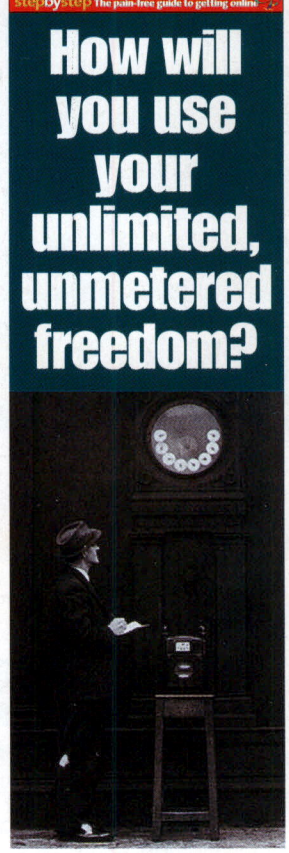
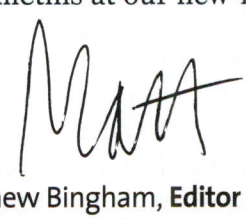


As there's now a bucketful of ISPs promising free, unlimited Web access, you might be wondering what it's like to surf for hours without worrying about phone costs. Well, here at Net Acres, that's just what we do every day. At dawn, a crack technician trudges down to the basement and spends an hour twisting a huge rubber band until it's full of magical Interweb energy, in order that we can spend the next 24 hours surfing to our heart's content – with no charge!

So how will *you* use your unmetered freedom? Truth is, you might not feel that pang of guilt downloading a huge Shockwave game or high-res screensaver, but your time's still precious – just because you're not racking up the phone bill looking for an elusive email address (page 54) or Grand Prix site (page 34) doesn't make the search any less frustrating.

That's why, even when you've fixed up your freephone ISP, we're sure you'll keep reading *the net*, because we're out there bringing you the best of the Web. And that includes keeping you up-to-date with the latest ISP deals – just check out the daily bulletins at our new-look Web site, ***www.thenetnow.net***.

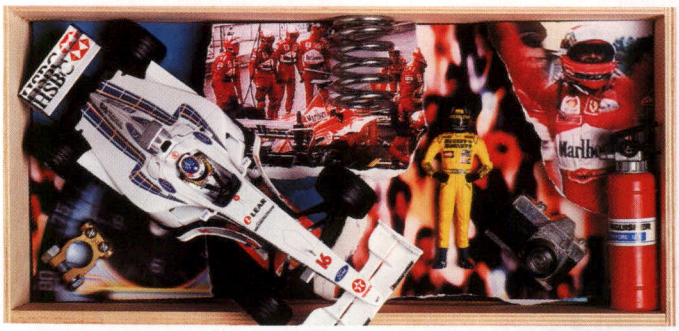
the net: surfing for you. As long as the rubber band doesn't snap.



Matthew Bingham, **Editor**
matthew.bingham@haynet.com

thenetcontents

Don't leave your home page without us



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When you're online and looking for DVDs, every day is sale day

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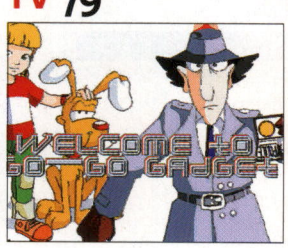

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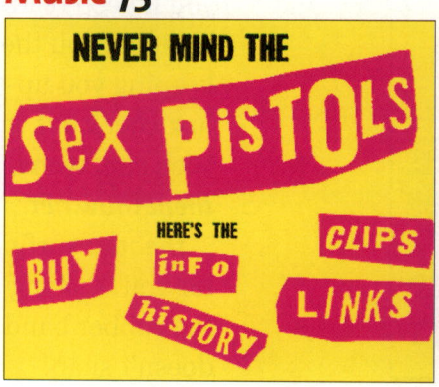

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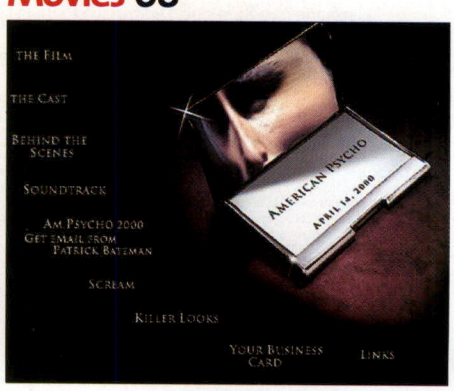

May 2000

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All the latest news, trapped and pinned to the page like a butterfly in the collector's net. And what's fat old Tom Arnold been getting up to?

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There's only one place to go shopping for non-stop hi-fi and DVD bargains – and that's on the Web

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Your inbox could be full of correspondence from celebrities, politicians and captains of industry – thanks to the power of email!

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PHONE FROM YOUR PC SPECIAL With a little bit of effort, you could call anywhere in the world for next to nothing. And you get to pretend you're using a walkie-talkie, too! 152

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EMAIL We show you how to mail more efficiently with power tips for home, work and mobile 156

The Arizona Masons' handshake took some practice

UNMETERED ACCESS

'Free' ISPs slug it out

They're queueing up to offer their services for nowt. But why?

The fax machine was glowing red-hot as we put this edition of *the net* together, with press release after press release coming in from Internet Service Providers, all promising 'free' unmetered access to the Web. AltaVista started the scramble, announcing plans to scrap call charges within three months for half a million surfers, at a one-off cost of up to £50 plus annual charges of £10 to £20.

Next of the big boys to step up to the plate was cable giant NTL, trumpeting free surfing from April 17 – as long as you spent £10 a month with the company's telephone service. BT followed suit with its SurfTime package. Then established ISPs LineOne and Breathe promised unrestricted free Internet access starting in March, followed by Freeserve, who announced several flat-fee access schemes, including a £6.99-a-month deal.

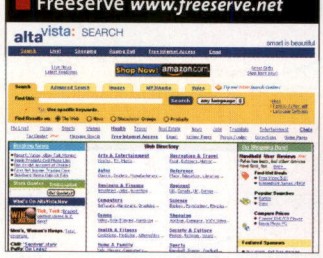
Of course, ISPs like Screaming.net (which was also in the news this month as it was sold to World Online) have had similar offers in place since last year, but have struggled to meet the huge demand for free access. Not only have they found it difficult to enable people to register, but the service has often been less than impressive. Although the latest offerings generally come from bigger companies, it remains to be seen whether they can handle what is sure to be huge demand.

Just two years ago, ISP subs and call charges cost us £25 a month

NET FOR NOTHING, ANYONE?

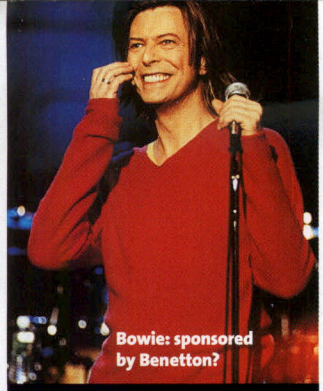
There are loads of companies promising free calls, but here are the main pieces and players on the unmetered Internet access chess board:

- AltaVista *www.altavista.co.uk*
- NTL *www.ntl.co.uk*
- LineOne *www.lineone.net*
- Breathe *www.timetobreathe.net*
- BT *www.bt.com*
- Freeserve *www.freeserve.net*



On a brighter note, it's worth remembering that just two years ago, ISP subscriptions and dialling charges were costing us about £25 a month. So how can companies afford to lose that sort of revenue? Well, they might be making a play to win our attention (AltaVista is huge in the USA, but a poor relation in Britain), or aiming for long-term profits by hooking us in to their telephony and online services (NTL has ties with 160 Internet businesses).

Whatever their reasons, it's good news for Net users, with new deals continually being announced. In a matter of months, we could be looking back on the time when we paid to dial up the Internet with the bitterness now reserved for the bad old days of paying ISP subscriptions...



Bowie: sponsored by Benetton?

SPOKEN WORD

LOOK WHO'S TALKING...

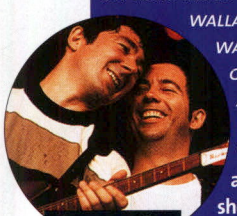
Top quotes from celebrity Net chats

'Being a journalist is a horrible life, endlessly looking at your watch wondering when the pub's open.'

*WE DON'T KNOW WHAT DAVID BOWIE WAS ON ABOUT AT **eden.vmg.co.uk**. HANG ON A SECOND, IT'S OPENING TIME...*

'I think Gromit has a few favourite philosophers, but I don't know off-hand which ones they are.'

*WALLACE, OF WALLACE AND GROMIT, CHATTING AT **www.virgin.net**.*



The Buzzcocks: nice boys really

'I wanted to be in a band that smashed up guitars.'

*STEVE DIGGLE FROM THE BUZZCOCKS EXPLAINS HIS BASE INSTINCTS AT **www.virgin.net***

'Dave always has a ceremonial tequila.'

CHARLIE GILLINGHAM OF THE COUNTING CROWS REVEALS THE BAND'S PRE-GIG RITUALS, ON AOL

'You should have seen the chicken'

KNOWHOW

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...?

No.10: Easter Eggs

I don't think you need to explain the origins of chocolate eggs with sweeties inside them...

Ahem. They're not the sort of Easter Eggs we're referring to.

So what are we talking about?

Give us a chance and we'll tell you. Easter Eggs are little surprises that creators hide in their creations. From a computing point of view, this means the developers of computer software or operating systems will hide away surprises that can only be activated by a certain sequence of keystrokes.

What sort of stuff do they put in?

Many eggs consist of nothing more than a list of the developers scrolling across your screen against a pretty background. However, there are a variety of little gimmicks hidden in software that might raise a smile even if they don't really get the pulse racing, such as movies and bizarre sound files.

What's the point?

So computer nerds can prove how clever they are. And it probably gives them something to do when they're bored.

Why should I care?

Because no matter how much you try not to become smug, you know people will be impressed when you're sat at their computer and hit a few keys to show them something they haven't seen before. It may be a sad indictment of the human race, but people love new computer tricks.

How do I find out where they are so I can impress my friends?

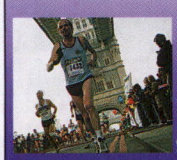
On the wonderful World Wide Web, of course. There's a whole bunch of sites listing Easter eggs for various platforms and programs. You could do worse than start at ***www.eeggs.com***, which not only offers a collection of software eggs but also branches out to explore those placed in films, music and TV programmes.

WHAT'S HOT & WHAT'S NOT

IN & OUT

RAY WINSTONE
www.copperlily.com/About RayWinstone
NEVE CAMPBELL
www.neveonline.com
HM THE QUEEN
www.royalarchive.com
ENGLAND
www.virtualengland.f9.co.uk

THE GREEN BAIZE
www.stud.ifi.uio.no/~hermunar/Snooker/Snoohoo



RUNNING 26 MILES
www.athlete.com
GREEN JACKETS
www.masters.org
SCOTTISH FOOTBALL
www.scottishfootball.com

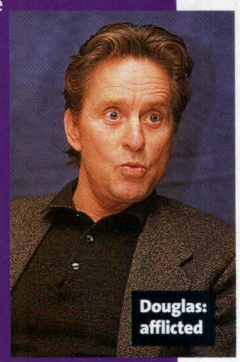
Neve: it's 'even' backwards

News Bytes

BITS IN BRIEF

NANNY SOCIETY

Who said Net censoring software doesn't work properly? Richard Bell, that's who. The wildlife artist's Web site was banned by a US Internet directory for its adult content. Phrases such as 'a pair of great tits' and 'a magnificent cock pheasant' were enough to do the damage, apparently.



Douglas: afflicted

MORE SEX PLEASE, WE'RE SURFERS

Latest research suggests that some 200,000 Internet users are addicted to online sex, and that this figure could be set to rocket in the near future. A report from the *Journal of Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* describes addicts as 'Cybersex Compulsives', and goes on to claim that online sex is a public health hazard.

COFFIN UP ON THE WEB

An American (there's a shock) funeral director is offering to Webcast funerals, so that people who cannot attend the service are able to watch it online instead. The Webcasts can be password-protected, meaning that only genuine grievers can watch.

www.FergersonFuneralHome.com

Funerals: online

PLASTIC FANTASTIC

The latest bizarre auction comes from Ebay, who recently asked for bids for 'One Original, Shrinkwrapped Carol Vorderman – Mint Quality'. The description went on to say that only 200 were ever made, and that the remaining 199 are all presenting TV shows. Any offers?

www.ebay.co.uk

Vorderman: cloned?

PICTURES: KOBAL, RETNA, PA, RICHARD LAWRENCE

talk
surf
talk
surf
talk
surf

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Footballers online

Top players promise Web chats with fans during Euro 2000

Multi-talented: reads *and* plays

It's not just pop stars and actors who are making use of the Internet to get closer to their fans. International footballers are in on the act as well.

England international Graeme Le Saux is a keen exponent of the Internet, and loves the way it has added a new dimension to the sport because fans can question their heroes during Web chats. 'It's not one-way but a two-way conversation,' he explains. 'The Net has become so massive now. I worked with Microsoft during the 1996 European Championships, doing some live commentary. That was my first experience of the Net, but it's taken off hugely since then.'

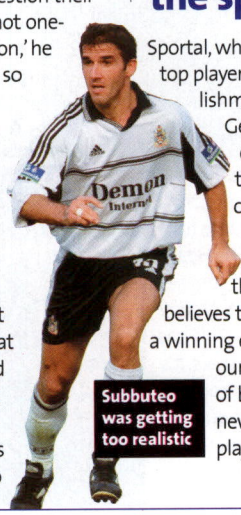
German international Karl-Heinz Riedle is also an Internet addict, although he admits that since he moved to London and new club Fulham, he can't get his computer hooked up. He's another fan of interactivity. 'It's a good thing for supporters to be able to communicate with players,' he told *the net*.

Le Saux loves the Net for adding to the sport

We caught up with Graeme and Karl-Heinz at the launch of the UK branch of European football specialist Sportal, which is promising Web chats with top players. The launch follows the establishment of Sportal footie sites in Germany, Italy and France. The company is also responsible for the official sites for a host of top clubs, including AC Milan and Paris Saint Germain.

Gary Rolin, who's behind all the football fun on the UK site, believes this huge network gives Sportal a winning edge. 'If you consider Euro 2000, our network of sites is bound to be of benefit for getting the latest news – not to mention access to players through their clubs.'

www.sportal.co.uk



Subbuteo was getting too realistic

INTERVIEW

STUART HALL: NET KNOCKOUT

Football reporter, quizmaster, clock collector – Stuart Hall certainly gets around. And now the former *It's A Knockout* front-man has his own Web site called The Church Hall, which gathers his eccentric match reports and footie musings under one roof...

How did the site get started?

Somebody at the BBC said they wanted to do a site with me in the pulpit,

'I'm very interested in buying a fridge online'

preaching. 'Sounds like a whizz-bang idea to me,' I said. I wanted to keep in touch with the people who listen to my nonsense on a Saturday afternoon. It's had a great response – we've reached a new audience of apostles and disciples.

But why dress like a bishop?

I was immersed in religion until I was 21 – I imbibed as much of it as possible. There's always a bit of biblical stuff in my match reports.

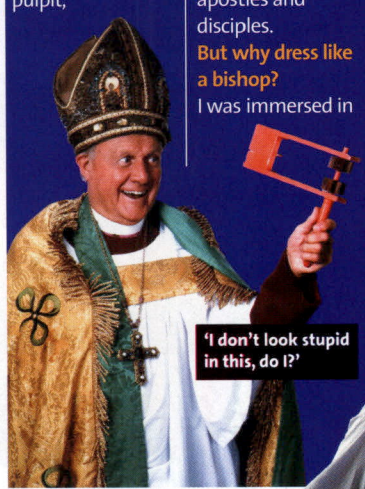
Do you use the Net for anything else?

I'm very interested in buying white goods online. I'm looking to buy a fridge at the moment.

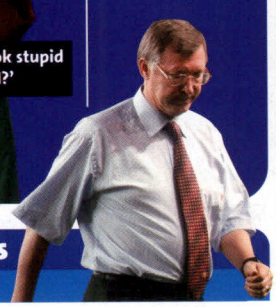
What else is in the pipeline for you?

I've been broadcasting for 40 years, so we're selecting the best match reports, the most outlandish games, for a book. I'm concentrating on my own version of *It's A Knockout* too, to take round Europe for conferences.

www.bbc.co.uk/churchhall



'I don't look stupid in this, do I?'



Celebrity bookmarks

No.10 **Alex Ferguson**

Lastminute.com

www.lastminute.com

Manchester United has an annoying habit of grabbing late goals to win matches, so there can't be a more apt site for Fergie to visit.

'Give me back the Cup. *Now!*'

The Moan Zone

www.green.ndirect.co.uk/themoan.htm

'What things annoy you?' cries this page. 'Everything!' Fergie would probably reply.

Victoria's House of Style

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Basement/9695

Useful for keeping an eye on what his arch-enemy Posh Spice is up to.

League Managers Association

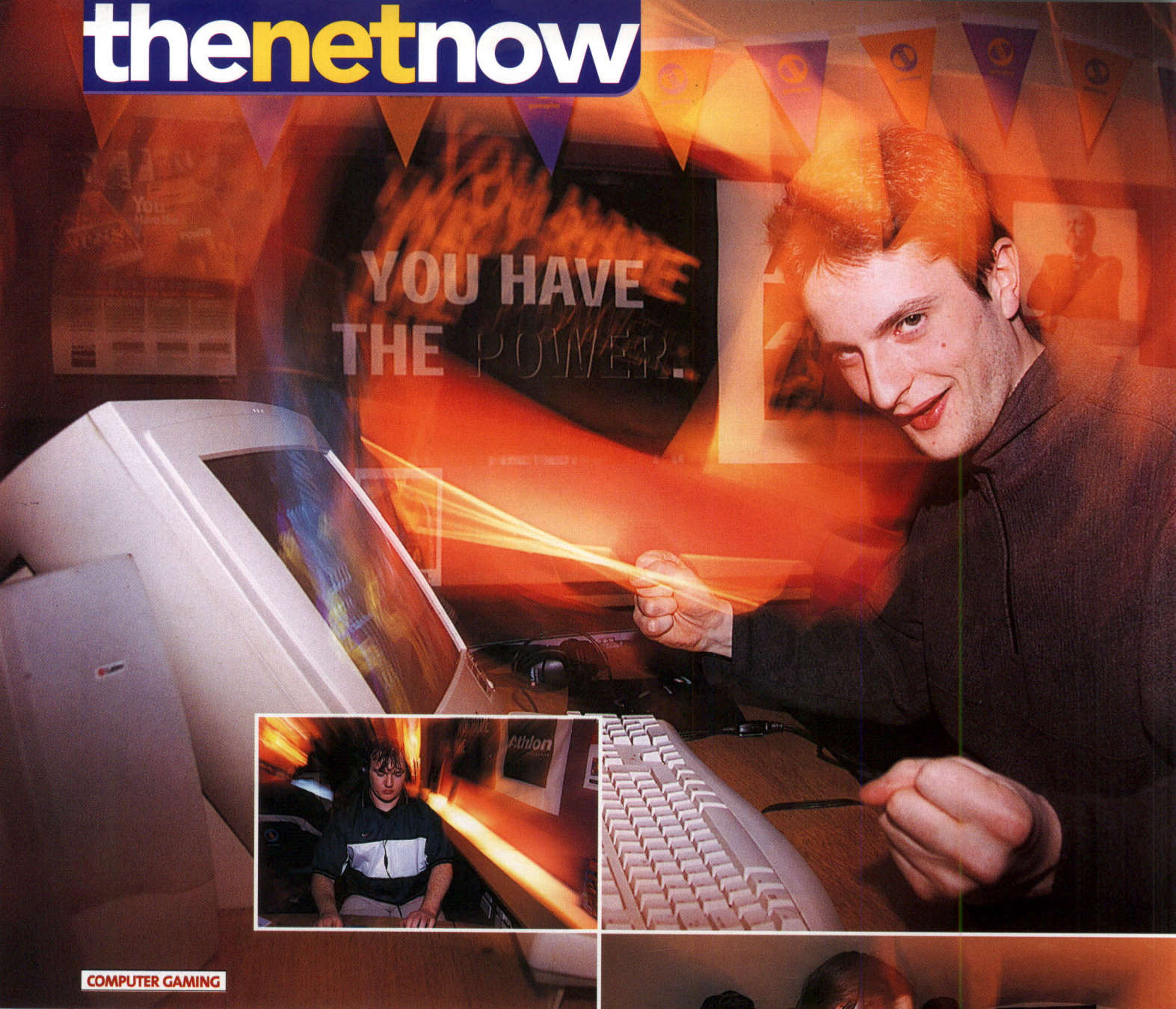
www.leaguemanagers.com

Fergie can look at the CVs of managers to see if there's anyone fit to take over his job.

Liverpool FC Manager Profile – Bob Paisley

www.liverpoolfc.net/profiles/paisley

Sir Alex can check out the most successful manager ever – Paisley took Liverpool to three European Cups.



COMPUTER GAMING

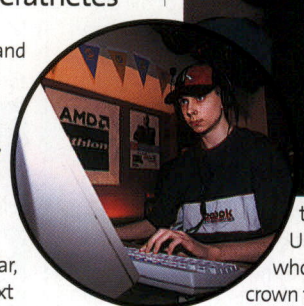
The real name of the game

Online gaming is a sport – so say the Cyberathetes

Two young men are squaring up in a dimly-lit London basement. A large crowd has assembled around them, loyalties split equally between the competitors as they join battle. 'Kill 'im!' squeaks one onlooker, eyes bulging with excitement. 'Behind you!' offers another.

It could be a British re-enactment of *Fight Club*, or a bloody bar brawl, but it's neither. No, this duel-to-the-death is the Gameplay UK Qualifier for the Cyberathletes Professional League, the world's most prestigious computer gaming competition.

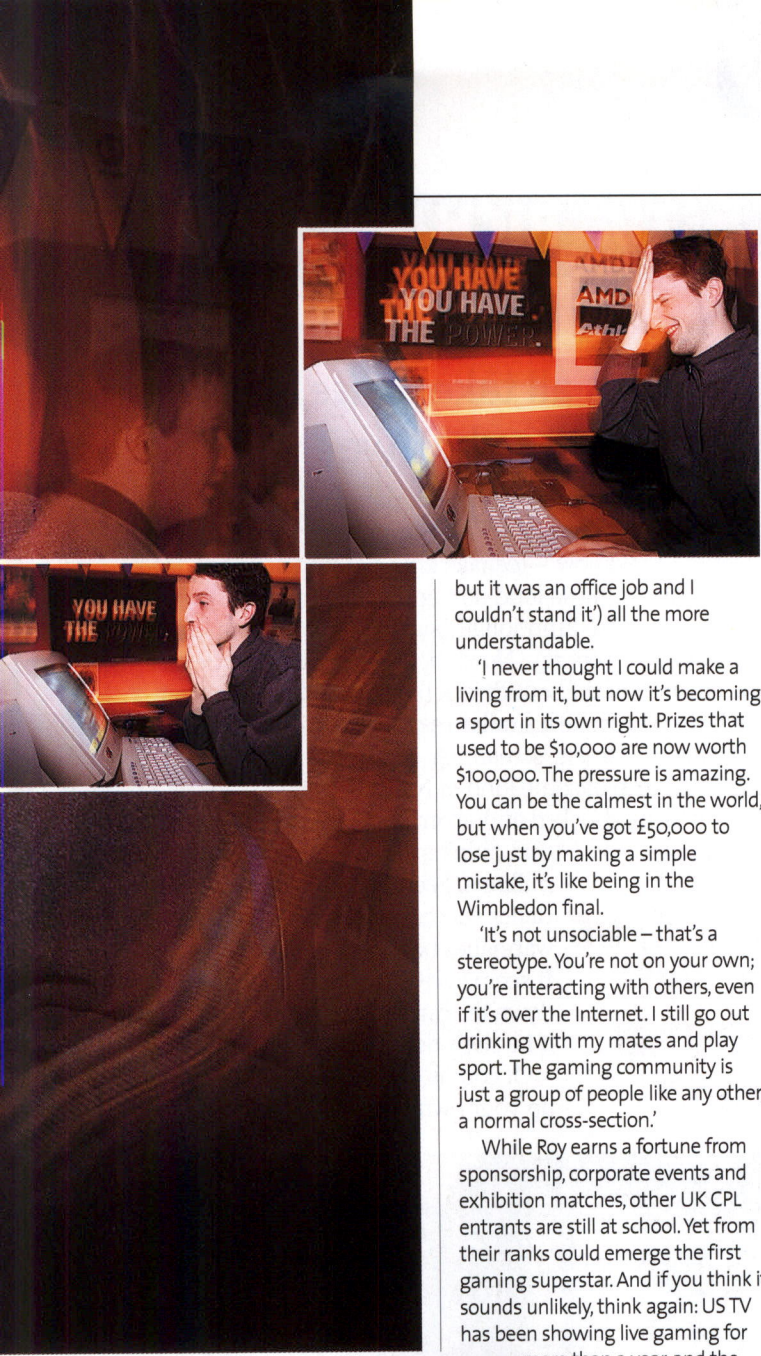
You can forget your pre-conceived ideas about gamers here; while 64 of the 65 are male and under 25, they treat their 'sport' as a serious occupation. Hence the 'athletes' tag – if events like this continue to expand at the rate they have done so far, they believe, the next David Beckham-style superstar will have spent his formative years hunched over a computer screen instead of chasing a football.



'There's always been this nerdy image – glasses, zits – but the people here are very sportsmanlike and professional,' says James Page, the reigning UK champion, who will lose his crown to Chris Hoare today. 'If you look at something like football, it's grown slowly over 50 years. This has grown in just three years. It's easy to parallel with something like snooker – you don't have to be a sportsman to do it, but you need skill.'

There's even a campaign to make gaming an Olympic sport

At stake today is an all-expenses-paid place at the CPL Final in Detroit, where the world's best will fight it out for a whopping $100,000 prize. This, then, is not for the fainthearted; each two-man bout consists of 10 minutes of *Quake III*, the simple aim being to kill as many as possible. To the layman, it's exasperating to



follow. The action is so far beyond what amateurs would consider a reasonable pace that characters become blurred shapes. Shots are fired in a scatter-gun fashion, the frenzied clicking of mice an eerie accompaniment, like a Kraftwerk single playing at 78rpm. Most of the competitors practice for at least three hours a day, mainly over high-speed connections, to reach such a level.

Sujoy Roy has seen it all before. At 24, the Londoner is a professional gamer who splits his time between the UK and Sweden, where connections are faster and the competition superior. Naturally, he's pre-qualified for the CPL finals. This year he hopes to make a six-figure sum from sponsorship deals alone, which makes his decision to quit a fledgling career as an investment banker ('My parents were worried, but it was an office job and I couldn't stand it') all the more understandable.

'I never thought I could make a living from it, but now it's becoming a sport in its own right. Prizes that used to be $10,000 are now worth $100,000. The pressure is amazing. You can be the calmest in the world, but when you've got £50,000 to lose just by making a simple mistake, it's like being in the Wimbledon final.

'It's not unsociable – that's a stereotype. You're not on your own; you're interacting with others, even if it's over the Internet. I still go out drinking with my mates and play sport. The gaming community is just a group of people like any other, a normal cross-section.'

While Roy earns a fortune from sponsorship, corporate events and exhibition matches, other UK CPL entrants are still at school. Yet from their ranks could emerge the first gaming superstar. And if you think it sounds unlikely, think again: US TV has been showing live gaming for more than a year, and the BBC are rumoured to be developing similar coverage.

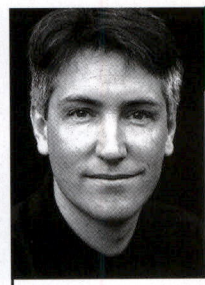
'I never thought I could make a living from it, but now it's a sport in its own right'

'Billiards, snooker and darts are considered sports; we don't see any difference between them and computer games,' says Edward Watson, director of gaming bar and host venue The Playing Fields. There's even a campaign to make gaming a recognised Olympic sport.

But if your Friday nights consist of shooting aliens on a PC, you might not be wasting your youth after all. And if they don't – well, it might already be too late...

THE DETAILS

UK CPL RESULTS AND DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.playingfields.co.uk
PRACTICE GAMING ONLINE:
www.gameplay.com
MSN: ***zone.msn.co.uk***
GAMESPY: ***www.gamespy.com***



JON CASIMIR
WORLD SURFING CHAMPION

The world according to McSweeney

Timothy McSweeney's Internet Tendency, a New York-based pop lit site (and sister to a quarterly journal), has a handy section for the reviewer, with a list of words and phrases for the scribe to cut and paste.

Now, given that I am: 1) lazy, 2) pathetically obedient and 3) paid by the word, whether I come up with them or not, I'm happy to go along with its suggestion that I describe the site as 'tiny', 'annoying' and 'pointless'. Even though some, if not all, of these words just aren't right.

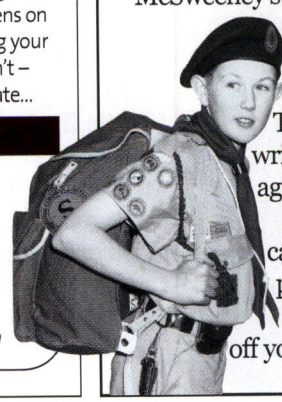
I'm also happy to say that 'with subject matters ranging from murder mysteries in Indian villages to pirate adventures and life on the moon, it's like it's produced by a troop of Boy Scouts', even though this is hardly true.

Because not only do these red herrings and self-deprecations help fill a column for me, they actually go some way towards capturing the serendipitous McSweeney's experience. Here is a site which specialises in derailing expectations, using fiction, parody and occasionally even something resembling journalism to find different ways of looking at life. Where else would you come across individual pieces under such headings as: 'I Can Get My Pants Off Quickly Because They Are Loose-Fitting and I Am Not Wearing Shoes'?

'It looks like it's produced by a troop of Boy Scouts'

Mercifully under-designed, McSweeney's survives on the quality of its text, its idiosyncratic eye and on the curatorial smarts of its caretaker, Dave Eggers. Few sites get away with this lo-fi approach. Few ever try.

McSweeney's (it's Eggers' mother's maiden name) makes the job look easy. Even in its most post-modern moments, there are compelling thought processes at work. There's a surprising amount of heart in the writing too, a seriousness that rubs hard against any irony.



And if all that is not enough for you, you can always take the advice of the reviewer's phrase list and simply 'throw it across the room'. If you can work out a way to get 'it' off your screen. ***www.mcsweeneys.net***

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: HUGO DIXON, HULTON GETTY

SITE WATCH

NEW AND APPROVED

A round-up of the best new sites on the Web

BRITMED
www.britmed.com
BritMed is an online medical service run by doctors. A consultation will cost £23, but you should get an answer in 48 hours.

WHATSONWHEN.COM
www.whatsonwhen.com
A huge database of what's on and when – the vast amount of detail is impressive.

INTERNATIONAL WINE CHALLENGE
www.intwinechallenge.co.uk
The International Wine Challenge puts 8500 wines to the test and has a staggering 550 professional judges to decide which are the best.

VOYEURISM

WEBCAMS OF THE MONTH

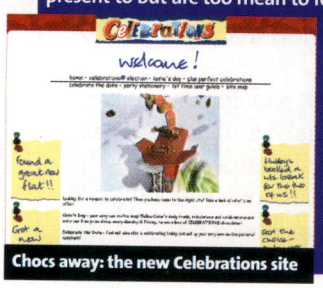
DISCOVERY.COM CAMS

www.discovery.com/cams/cams.html
Every month we bring you inane or bizarre Webcams, so we thought it was about time we offered some sites you might want to visit more than once. The cams on the Discovery Web site offer a variety of views on the world covering a range of subjects: check out Times Square, Big Ben and even Nessie. If you're more interested in the antics of your fellow people, there's a camera set up in a wedding chapel in Las Vegas. And for something more scientific, there are views of hurricanes, volcanoes and even of the sun – for which you won't need those pathetic eclipse specs to look at.

The sun: no page three

COMPETITION **STUFF YOURSELF SILLY**

The annual choc-fest that is Easter is here at last, and we've got 500 boxes of Celebrations chocolates to give away. So if you a) just can't get enough chocolate, b) don't get any easter eggs, or c) have a special someone you'd like to give a present to but are too mean to fork out for, claim your free box now. Simply log on to our new Web site at ***www.thenetmag.net,*** and the first 500 people to fill in their details will get a box of lovely chocolates for absolutely nothing.
www.celebrations365.com



Chocs away: the new Celebrations site

TIM RICHARDSON
WEB WATCHER

Let's all take a nice, deep breathe, shall we?

Ever seen those black-and-white news clips from the '60s, with fans screaming their heads off every time anyone mentions The Beatles? You know – teenage girls clasping their hands to their faces and screaming so loud it makes your ears bleed.

That's hysteria for you. Emotionally supercharged, it's an unpredictable, pent-up energy. Now, the Internet may not be able to claim the creation of the soundtrack that defined an entire generation, but it does provoke a similar response. Okay, so people aren't wandering the streets, screaming – but you have to admit the world is in the grip of some kind of Net hysteria.

Silly money's being chucked at dotcom companies. Businesses that didn't exist an hour ago are worth millions. Feeding the hype are rags-to-riches success stories where penniless wannabes become Web gazillionaires. It seems even the bloke selling whelks down the car-park can become a tycoon if he slaps dotcom after his name.

What will happen if, or when, dot-com mania tumbles?

Of course, if you don't fancy setting up your own dotcom you can always invest in one. After all, share prices are currently going only one way, and it would be churlish not to get involved in this obviously no-lose moneyspinning game. Wouldn't it?

'No really, flying is dead easy'

In Hong Kong recently, thousands of investors took to the streets to hand in their share applications for the entertainment portal, Tom.com. Traffic came to a standstill, and police were called to control the crowds. The incident was good-natured and went without a scuffle. But it might be different if – or when – dot-com mania tumbles. For then harmless hysteria could turn to rage.

Like in July last year, when a US investor ran amok killing his wife and two children, before shooting dead nine other people in Atlanta. He'd lost a fortune trading in Internet stocks. So hey, let's all calm down and not try to get so worked up. Okay?

PICTURE: KOBAL

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Our business is to serve you

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Terms: http://www.magic-moments.com/terms/

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Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic EPlus £75pa

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- 10 POP Email boxes
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Multiple Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Email & Web Hosting Packages:

Magic SoHo £130pa

- 30 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing
- CGI-BIN, MySQL and PHP4 support
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Standard £155pa

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- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- CGI-BIN, MySQL and PHP4 support
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic from the Heart £195pa

Special Package

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- Unlimited Email addresses
- 15 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- CGI-BIN, MySQL and PHP4 support
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Enterprise £255pa

- 100 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 20 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- SSL secure server
- CGI-BIN, MySQL and PHP4 support
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

£10 from this package is contributed to charitable causes. Charities include: NSPCC, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Imperial Cancer Trust. Details: http://www.magic moments.com/charity/

Registered Charity No: 235825

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Every wedding should be perfect, but that's easier said than done – there's just so much to do. Don't worry, we've got everything you need. As well as a personalised wedding planner which ensures you don't forget a thing, there are hundreds of beautiful dresses and thousands of fantastic venues. And a wedding shop and gift shop full of great ideas. We've even joined forces with BA Travel Shops, for every kind of honeymoon and wedding abroad.

And if you register with us, as well as receiving a free copy of our booklet 'Weddings Made Simple' you could win £10,000 towards your dream wedding. So all in all, you'll find that making your big day really big is a piece of cake.

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confetti.co.uk
weddings made simple.

THE BEST, THE WORST AND THE DAFTEST STUFF ON THE WEB

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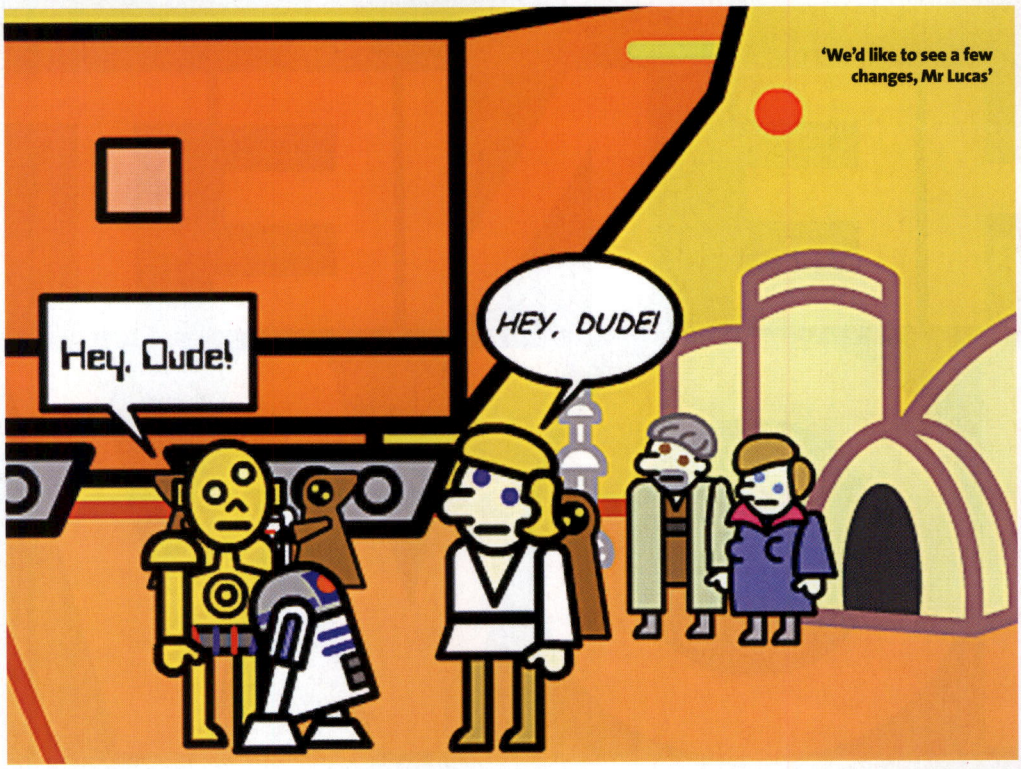


BEST CARTOON

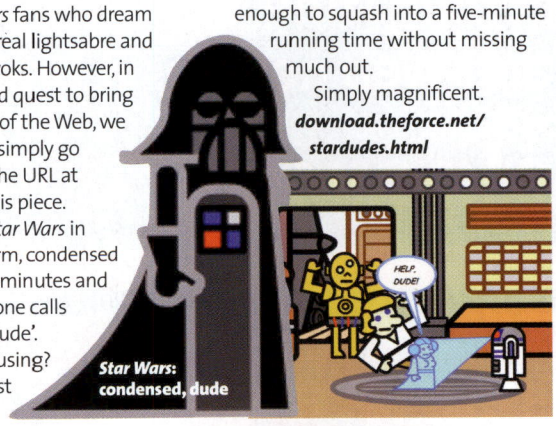
SKYWALKER IN ANIMATION SHOCK

Most of the *Star Wars* stuff on the Net is a) brilliant b) exhaustive and c) for anal *Star Wars* fans who dream of owning a real lightsabre and talking to Ewoks. However, in our continued quest to bring you the best of the Web, we suggest you simply go and type in the URL at the end of this piece.

Imagine *Star Wars* in animated form, condensed into just five minutes and where everyone calls each other 'dude'. Sounds confusing? Not really. Just have a look and you'll realise that although *Star Wars* did have a plot (unlike *The Phantom Menace*), it was simple enough to squash into a five-minute running time without missing much out.

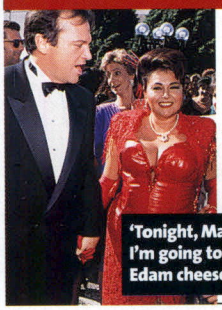
Simply magnificent.

download.theforce.net/stardudes.html



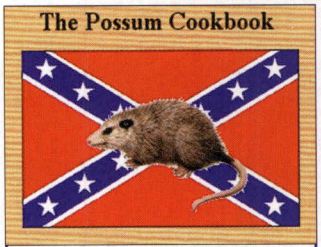
Star Wars: condensed, dude

SADDEST GIT Here comes the bride


'Tonight, Matthew, I'm going to be Edam cheese'

THE MAN BRAVE ENOUGH TO WALK DOWN THE aisle with everyone's favourite weightwatcher, Roseanne Barr, has excelled himself. Tom Arnold has launched a site called Marry Tom, in which young ladies can email in a picture and tell him about themselves; he will take a few of them out on dates, then marry one. It's risky, but surely he can't do any worse than a dumpy actress cum chat-show hostess.

www.marrytom.com



BEST RECIPE

HELLO, POSSUMS!

Every so often the carnivores among us just wish for something a little bit different for our meat option. Steak is great, chicken enjoyable, and you can never argue with a bit of pork. But sometimes you need to branch out – in which case, you may just fancy a bit of possum. Whether it's Wild Possum Kebab or Possum Tartare, we're sure you'll find a dish at The Possum Cookbook that takes your fancy. There's even some great advice on how to catch your dinner. Dame Edna must be smacking her lips as we speak.

wwww2.msstate.edu/~brb1/possum.html

'Dentist will see you now'

PICTURES: RETNA, PA

Net Charts 5

THE WEB'S FAVOURITES

MOST HATED FOOTBALLERS

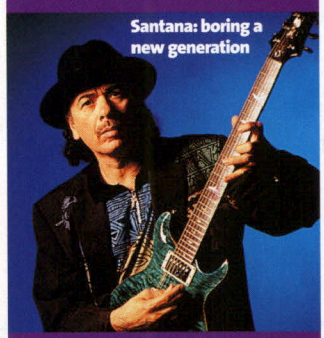
1 David Beckham
2 Roy Keane
3 Dennis Wise
4 Alan Shearer
5 Robbie Savage

www.football365.co.uk

Towelling: the latest look

MOST POPULAR CDs PLAYED ON PCs

1 **Santana** *Supernatural*
2 **Dr Dre** *Chronic 2001*
3 **The Smashing Pumpkins** *MACHINA – the Machines of God*
4 **Backstreet Boys** *Millennium*
5 **Shania Twain** *Come On Over*


Santana: boring a new generation

According to CDDB (***www.cddb.com***), these are the most popular CDs played on computers. That would explain the US bias – although there's still no excuse for the Backstreet Boys providing 'the soundtrack for Web surfers... and late-night term paper writers'. Whatever that means.

BEST-SELLING BOOKS

1 **The Brethren** *John Grisham*
2 **The Naked Chef** *Jamie Oliver*
3 **The Beach** *Alex Garland*
4 **'Tis** *Frank McCourt*
5 **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** *J.K. Rowling*

www.uk.bol.com

MOST POPULAR PC SOFTWARE DOWNLOADS

1 ICQ
www.icq.com
2 Webshots Desktop
www.webshots.com
3 Speednet
www.paramagnus-development.com
4 StayOn Pro
www.stayonpro.com/
5 WinZip
www.winzip.com

You've seen *the net*'s old Web site, but you've seen nothing like this. It's a blockbusting, fast-moving sequel that eclipses the original!

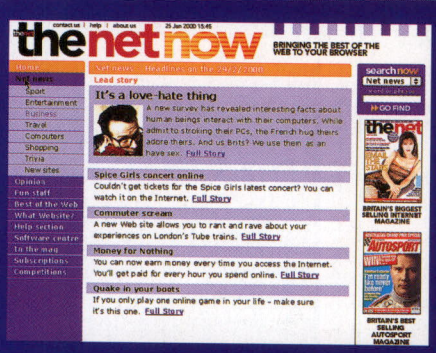
THE NET NOW

NET NEWS, FUN STUFF AND OPINION

Featuring an up-to-the-minute, geek-free Internet news service from your favourite Net magazine. We'll keep you informed of all the latest ISP and Web news as it breaks!

www.thenetnow.net

WHAT'S INSIDE THE NET NOW?



NET NEWS

All the latest Internet news updated every day: we'll bring you the latest sites, news of who's Webcasting and Webchatting where and when – plus all that's happening in the world of the Net.

FUN STUFF

Need something to pass the time? Bored at work and looking for some light relief? Check out our email attachment of the day, offering you the loudest laugh in cyberspace.

SOFTWARE CENTRE

We'll show you where to find the best software available. Whether it's for work or play, we've searched out all of the essential software to make your life online more enjoyable.

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25 Jan 2000 15:45

thenetnow

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- Home
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- Opinion
- Fun stuff
- Best of the Web
- What Website?
- Help section
- Software centre
- In the mag
- Subscriptions
- Competitions

TOP NEWS STORY

The net launches new Web site

The net, Britain's best-selling Internet magazine, has revealed its new Web site. Offering a constantly updated consumer news service, links to the best sites on the Web as rated by the magazine and also housing the funniest email humour around it makes an ideal home page. Full Story

searchnow
Net news
word or phrase
GO FIND

LATEST NEWS Business

THE BEST MEDICINE

There's no faster way of getting the world to laugh than to email a joke to all your friends, who then email it to theirs, who then email it to theirs. Now we've collected all the best email jokes and attachments in one place.

Go to fun stuff

IGNORE THE HYPE

It might seem like every man and his dog is investing in Internet shares and making pots of money, but is it all getting out of hand? Columnist Tim Richardson thinks we should all calm down a little bit.
Full Story

WHAT WEBSITE?

Find the very best of the Web in seconds

SHOW ME THE WEB

ULTIMATE HELP

We've collected all you need to know and put it in the plainest of English.

PLEASE HELP ME!

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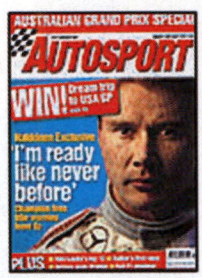
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE



BRITAIN'S BEST SELLING AUTOSPORT MAGAZINE

WHAT WEBSITE?

With the huge number of Web addresses in *the net* each month, you could be excused from not wanting to type them all in. No worries: we've archived every site we've ever featured!

BEST OF THE WEB

What's your favourite Web site? We'll feature one Web site every week from your recommendations. Plus, we'll keep a live league table of the sites that receive the most votes from readers.

HELP SECTION

Need some help finding your way around the Internet? Don't know your FTP from your HTML? We've got loads of Net advice written in plain English to help you out.

28 FRI I scream

Release of *Scream 3*, April 28

David Arquette, Neve Campbell and Courteney Cox are back in this, the third in the trilogy of thriller/horror/mystery flicks. Two years after the previous installment, the new movie is eagerly anticipated, although US reviews of it range from 'the funniest of the trilogy' through to 'dragged-out and repetitive'. One thing is certain, however: the poster will be in that distinctive black and white design yet again. ***www.scream3.com***

'What have they done to my hair?!'

Monica tried a new tactic

23 SUN Eggstravaganza

Easter Day, April 23

It's not like it could slip past unnoticed – after all, Easter eggs have been in the shops since Christmas. Easter, as we all know, is a religious festival, but did you know that the custom of eating eggs during the period actually dates back to the Egyptians, for whom the egg represented life? Probably not. One thing is for sure, though; it means that summer's on it's way at last. Something to be ecstatic about. ***www.happy-easter.com***

DEAR DIARY

APR 5 WEDNESDAY Birthday: **Agnetha Faltskog** (Abba), 50 ***www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Balcony/6852***

6 THUR US Masters Golf Tournament ***www.golfcourses.org*** The modern Olympic Games re-opened in Athens in 1896 ***www.olympics.com***

7 FRI *Hanging Up* released ***www.spe.sony.com/movies/hangingup/index.html*** UK Trainer Day ***www.shoeworld.co.uk***

8 SAT Birthday: **Patricia Arquette**, 32 ***imagine.simplenet.com/patricia***

9 SUN San Marino F1 Grand Prix ***www.itv-f1.com*** Birthday: Robbie Fowler, 25 ***www.liverpoolfc.net***

15 SAT Embassy World Snooker Championships ***www.embassysnooker.com*** Birthday: Samantha Fox, 34 ***www.samfox.co.uk***

16 SUN 2000 Flora London Marathon ***www.london-marathon.co.uk*** Birthday: Gabriella Sabatini, 30 ***www.tennis.org.uk***

17 MON Birthday: **Sean Bean**, 41 ***persweb.direct.ca/wkent/seanbean.html***

18 TUES Birthday: Hayley Mills, 54 ***www.seedship.com/hayley*** Jochen Rindt born in 1942 ***www.uic.edu/~wap/Jochen.html***

19 WED London Festival of Literature ***www.theword.org.uk*** Birthday: Sue Barker, 44 ***www.bbc.co.uk/sport/questionofsport***

25 TUES Birthday: **Al Pacino**, 60 ***home.earthlink.net/~joepez/pacino***

26 WED Birthday: Stevie Nicks, 52 ***nicksfix.com*** Madame Tussauds opened in 1928 ***www.madame-tussauds.com***

27 THUR Birthday: Sheena Easton, 41 ***www.sheenaeaston.com*** Birthday: Michael Fish, 56 ***www.weatherimages.org***

28 FRI Muhammad Ali refused induction to the army in 1967 ***www.princeofheaven.com*** Wembley opened, 1923 ***www.wembleynationalstadium.co.uk***

29 SAT Rugby League Challenge Cup Final, Murrayfield ***www.rugbyonline.freeserve.co.uk*** Birthday: Uma Thurman, 30 ***uma.utw.com/root***

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: KOBAL, PA, LONDON FEATURES, RETNA

8 SAT Hooves of steel

Grand National, Aintree, April 8

Head down to the bookies: it's the Grand National, the time when those who never normally bet cross the threshold to place a few quid on a fancy-looking nag. The field is always big, so here are *the net*'s top tips: nine-year-olds have won the most races (33), only two greys have ever won, and, most tellingly of all, the favourite has only won 11 times in the last 100 years. Don't say we didn't warn you. ***www.aintree.co.uk***

Spooked by the taxman, the nervous jockeys bolted

10 MON Birthday: Steven Seagal, 49 ***mav.nu/seagal***

Birthday: Gloria Hunniford, 60 ***www.channel5.co.uk***

11 TUES *Gandhi* won eight Oscars in 1983 ***www.imdb.com***

Birthday: Jeremy Clarkson, 40 ***www.uglycars.co.uk***

12 WED Disneyland Paris opened in 1992 ***www.disneylandparis.com***

Bobby Moore born in 1941 ***www.hall-of-fame.co.uk***

13 THUR Birthday: Gary Kasparov, 37 ***www.chessweb.com***

Birthday: Seamus Heaney, 61 ***metalab.unc.edu/dykki/poetry/heaney/heaney-cov.html***

14 FRI *Love, Honour and Obey* released ***hometown.aol.com/AVision200***

Birthday: Sarah Michelle Gellar, 23 ***www.undeniable.com/sarah***

20 THUR First Day of Passover ***www.jewish.co.uk***

Birthday: Joey Lawrence, 24 ***www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/6104/joeylawrence.html***

21 FRI *American Psycho* released ***www.americanpsycho.com***

Birthday: Queen Elizabeth II, 74 ***www.zip.com.au/~rocket/queen.htm***

22 SAT Cricket – Benson and Hedges Cup ***www.cricinfo.com***

Birthday: Jack Nicholson, 68 ***home.earthlink.net/~joepez/jack***

St George's Day ***www.england.com***

British F1 Grand Prix, Silverstone ***www.silverstone-circuit.co.uk***

24 MON Birthday: Paula Yates, 40 ***www.groupiecentral.com***

Birthday: Barbra Streisand, 58 ***www.bjsmusic.com***

30 SUN British Touring Cars Championship, Thruxton ***www.btcc.co.uk***

Birthday: Willie Nelson, 67 ***www.countrystars.com***

MAY 1 MONDAY Women's FA Cup final ***footballgirls.freeservers.com***

Birthday: **Joanna Lumley**, 54 ***members.aol.com/lemfou2***

Cricket: Natwest Trophy ***www.334notout.com***

Birthday: Jimmy White, 38 ***acorn.educ.nottingham.ac.uk/SchEd/pages/jwss***

3 WED 35th Annual Academy of Country Music ***www.country.com***

Birthday: **Ben Elton**, 40 ***ben-elton.com***

4 THUR First Derby ran at Epsom, 1780 ***racingtips.co.uk***

Audrey Hepburn born in 1929 ***audreyhepburn.home-page.org***

topukwebsites.com

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Dear thenet,

So you've finally abandoned your long-standing tradition of putting women on the front cover, replacing them with Vic and Bob. Okay, so it's a lot better than Shania Twain, but how about some better-looking chaps for the ladies? Ricky Martin and Leonardo DiCaprio are both really into the Net – probably. Go on, make a young lady happy.

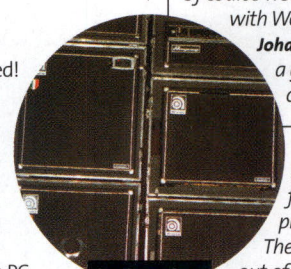
Sarah Copley
Via email

Actually, we thought we'd carry on down the northern comics route: look out for Bernard Manning and Roy 'Chubby' Brown in forthcoming issues. Will that do?

Dear thenet,

I'm confused! If I want to buy some speakers to use for my PC, sound system and TV, which is better: speakers specifically for PCs or normal speakers? The PC speakers are considerably cheaper; has this got any reflection on their quality?

Matt Rawlingson-Plant
mattrp40@hotmail.com



'Delivery for a Mr Lemmy'

Always buy speakers for the most expensive piece of kit you've got. The sound which comes out of your PC will not be enhanced by using a proper sound system; however CDs and TV will sound considerably better on big, expensive speakers than they will if put through PC speakers.

READER'S LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear thenet,

I read your animation feature (April issue) and loved the pictures you had of the Wombles reading your magazine. It brought back memories of my childhood spent eagerly watching Uncle Bulgaria *et al* getting up to mischief. I fancied a little nostalgia trip and as your Cult TV feature promised that old television shows migrate onto the Net, where better to start looking? However, I really struggled to find a Wombles Web site, other than a bizarre adventure game called Escape from the Wombles of Hell (***www.funny.co.uk/wombles***). Can you tell me where to find something a bit more sensible?

Dean Johnson
d.johnson@legit.co.uk

Of course we can. You could do worse than begin with Womble Lovers at ***www.designwest.com/Johanna/womble/index.html****, where there's a great deal of info as well as links to other Wombles sites.*

Wombles: world wide superstars

Dear thenet,

I really enjoyed your article on which current TV shows might become cult favourites of the future (April issue). However, you appear to have missed out a few of the most obvious candidates, namely the truly dreadful *Babes In The Wood* (***www.babesinthewood.co.uk***), the students' favourite *This Morning* (***www.g-wizz.net/thismorning***) and the Lenny Henry 'vehicle' *Chef!* (***www.siegler.net/chef***). The last site is, unbelievably, a fan page. I mean, who actually watches a show like that and decides to go and set up a Web site in tribute to it? I really despair sometimes.

James Jones
jj19@hotmail.com

Dear thenet,

I recently tried to buy a book from the shopping section of a sports Web site. However, when I tried to send the form with my credit card details on, a small screen popped up on my browser which said: 'The details you are submitting are being sent by email. Do you wish to continue?' I stopped because I wasn't sure what this meant – is it OK to send details like this?

Karen Carver
kc@yahoo.com

In a word, no. Decent e-commerce sites will have spent a great deal of money setting up a secure server which can handle credit card transactions safely. Email is not a safe way to send such details, as messages can be intercepted en route, leaving you wide open to fraud. The only way to shop safely is to rely on your browser: Netscape will show a padlock on the bottom bar when a site is secure, while Explorer should flash up a warning before you send any details.

MAIL MONKEY Now you're stalking

From: mailmonkey@chimp.co.uk
Sent: Wednesday March 15, 2000
To: editor@thenetmag.co.uk
Subject: Spears of destiny

Dear Editor,

Enjoyed your last mag – fantastic for lining the kids' cage. However, I was somewhat surprised to see your feature about emailing celebrities. Don't get me wrong – there's nothing I enjoy more of an evening than firing off a cheery, harmless message to the likes of Aniston and Aguilera. It's only the authorities who seem to have a problem with it. They don't understand that, as a monkey, I'm always naked anyway. My lawyer reckons I could get away with community service.

But spare a thought for celebrities, like myself, on the receiving end of such cyber-adulation. I've lost count of the number of times some lass called Spears has been on to me. Now I like a bit of innocent flirtation as much as the next primate, but young Britney's demands have become increasingly bizarre – claiming she was born to make me happy, that sort of thing. I wouldn't mind, but she's no looker, is she?

By the way, thought I'd send you a quick snap of my recent appearance at the Brit Awards. Obviously I've tried to keep my involvement with Basement Jaxx quite low-key, but I couldn't refuse this one... Yours, lost in music,

Mail monkey

www.britneyspears.org

astralwerks.com/basementjaxx

www.cybercrimes.net

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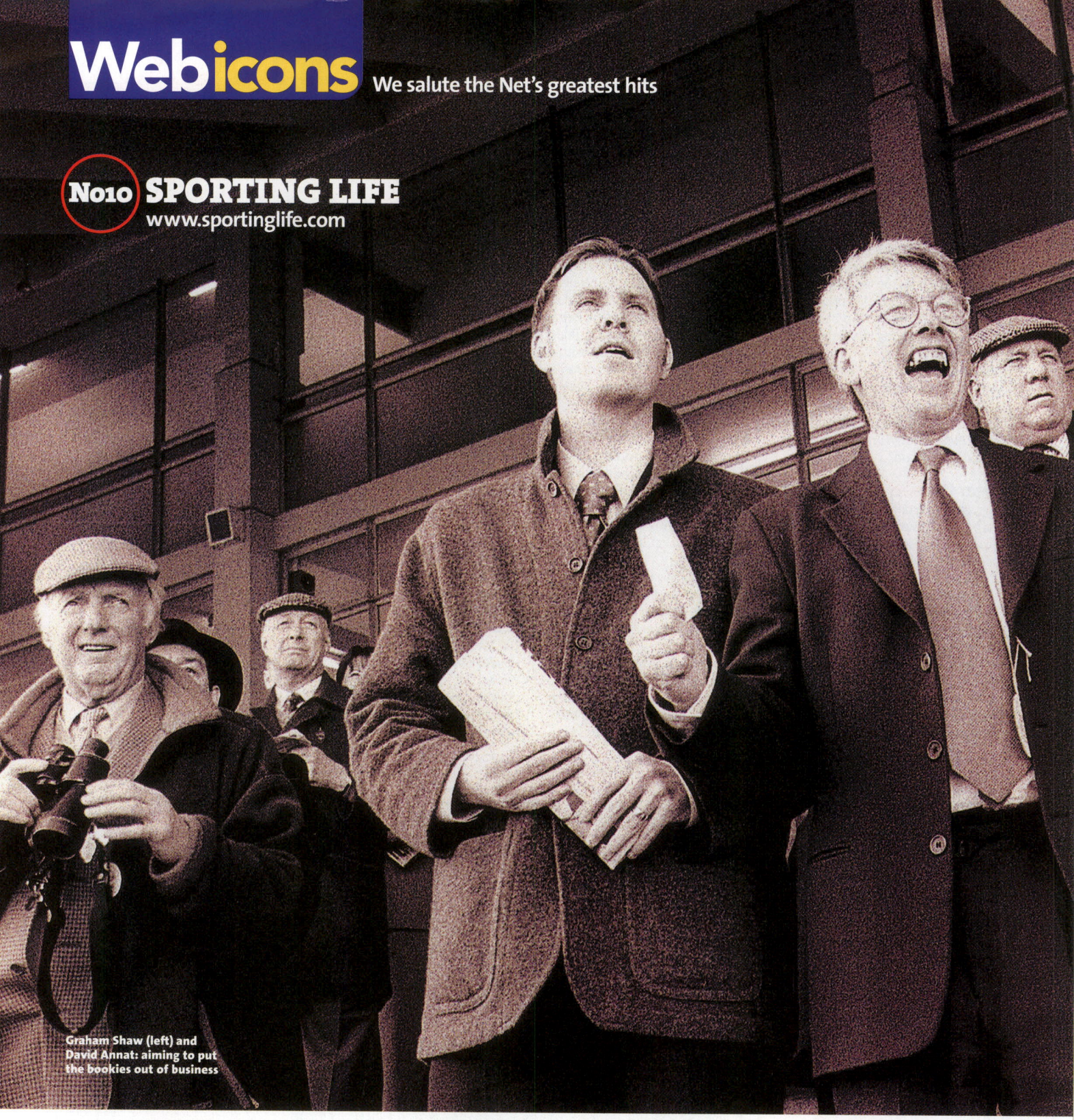
www.sportinglife.com



Graham Shaw (left) and David Annat: aiming to put the bookies out of business

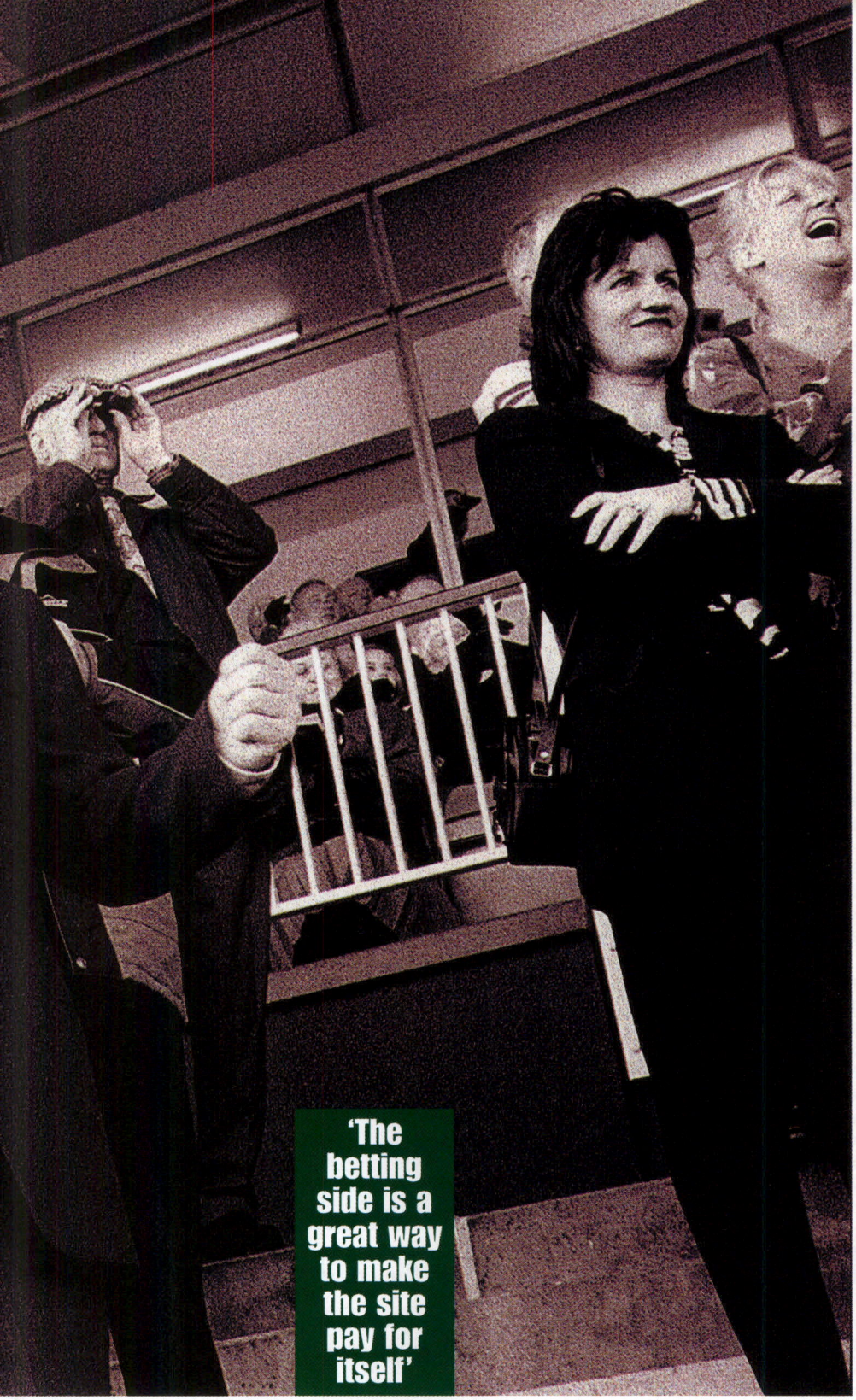
ODDS-ON FAVOURITE

Sportinglife.com has already celebrated its third birthday – making it old enough in Web terms to warrant a telegram from the Queen.

The recently redesigned site is essentially a news service covering 13 major sports in stunning detail. And even if your main interests lie away from the mass market of football, rugby and cricket *et al*, there's an 'Extra' section covering the smaller sports, which means you can still find out facts as obscure as the winner of the Golden Charter Women's All England Under-31 indoor bowls title (Cheryl Northall if you must know).

Sporting Life takes its name and brand associations from the former racing paper of the same name, but managing director David Annat, the man responsible for the site from its inception, was convinced from the start that it should cover more than just racing. 'It was a big decision not to have the site as just an extra part of the newspaper. We had a lot of trouble getting people to fund it, which seems ironic with the amount of money being thrown at the Internet now.' He says the redesign of the site was much needed. 'The old site was very dated in terms of navigation. All the content was there but you'd never have found it. There are now 27 sub-menus on football alone.'

'It's quicker and easier to get around,' says editor Graham Shaw. He's particularly pleased with the live football league tables. At 3pm on Saturday, with every score at 0-0, each team has one point, and this is amended accordingly every time time a goal is scored.



'The betting side is a great way to make the site pay for itself'

SPORTINGLIFE.COM

WHAT IS IT? A site offering sports news and statistics and an online betting service.
LAUNCHED 1996.
TRAFFIC 15 million page impressions per month and 750,000 users.
BASE Central Park,New Lane,Leeds.
KEY FEATURES Sports news, vidiprinter, live league tables, diary, online betting.

Sporting Life has such an history association with horse racing that it seems almost natural that the site should also offer online betting. Totalbet is a joint venture between sportinglife.com and the Tote, offering online gambling on a huge range of sports with betting taxes of just two per cent.

Although the betting service came along 18 months after the launch of the site, it had been at the forefront of Annat's thinking for some time. 'It was always an idea that we could develop a betting product, and we finally launched it in June '98. It's a great way to make the site pay for itself.'

If you aren't sure on which nag to blow your hard-earned, there's plenty of news and advice from tipsters. Of course, when you've a few quid riding on a horse, you'd really like to watch the race in the faintly ridiculous belief that shouting at a screen will make your horse run faster – and it may only be a matter of time before this becomes a reality. The site has already run trial broadcasts of two races with live betting, and hopes to cover more races in the future.

So will bookies soon become a thing of the past? Well, apart from the smoke-filled rooms, there's not too much that Sporting Life can't match. Before you know it they'll be paying out on Manchester United winning the championship at Christmas when there's still half the season to play.

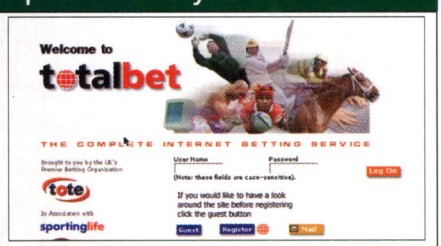
PLACE YOUR BETS... but not before you've seen what the Sporting Life experts have to say here

RACING NEWS

A paradise for any fan of the sport of kings: all the info you could ever need on races, prices and form. Short of telling you what the horses had for breakfast, you'll find everything here.

BETTING ZONE

Offering in-depth betting tips, advice and news, focusing on nine sports and covering a variety of other events. You can even check up on the track record of the site's betting advice.



TOTALBET

A partnership between Sportinglife.com and the Tote, Totalbet is an online betting service with advice on types of bets and where to put your money – and only charges two per cent tax.

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURE: JIM COLLEY

WELL ON THE WEB Doctor will email you now

PLANET MEDICA

www.planetmedica.com

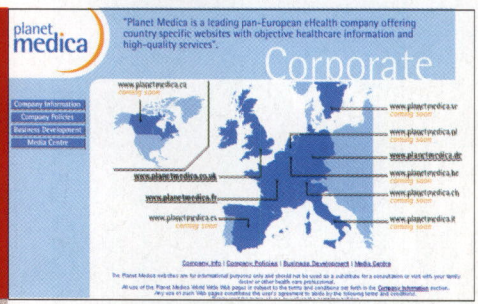
'Absolutely archaic,' is Martin Hardens' description of healthcare information in the UK. He has examples to back him up. 'If you move from Scotland to the South-East, it takes eight weeks before your medical files get transferred.' He has a point.

So who is this guy? With 15 years in healthcare services behind him, Martin Hardens MSc, PharmD, MBA, is chief operating officer and co-founder of Planet Medica, a healthcare portal with a difference.

Besides a million-word encyclopedia, which should help surfers distinguish between meningitis and a hangover, there are self-evaluation tools – including a profile and diary of symptoms.

'The profile helps visitors see what the most likely diagnosis is,' explains Hardens. Meanwhile, the diary lets patients 'keep tabs on the patterns of illness, which they can then show to their doctor online – without even going into the surgery'.

The site's team is liberally sprinkled with medics



But isn't confidentiality a worry when patients are asked to store medical details on the Net? Fear not. 'While the US industry regulates itself, in Europe we have the Data Protection Directive,' beams Hardens.

So is the site designed to send docs to the dole queue? No – the eight-strong Planet Medica team is sprinkled with medics. 'We don't want to jeopardise the doctor-patient relationship ,' Hardens explains.

Planet Medica is no fly-by-night operation run from a garage. Besides a HQ in Brussels, there are offices in London, Paris and Cologne to produce English, French and German sites – and more are on the way. 'By July we want to have bases in eight European markets,' outlines Hardens. The resultant cross-fertilisation will help vitalise the site's contents: 'The German editor might email his colleagues about developments.' European co-operation might just make you more healthy.

THANKS TO MADAME TUSSAUD'S, LONDON: WWW.MADAME-TUSSAUDS.COM

YESTERDAY'S NEWS Bringing the past to life with the power of the Internet

NEWSPLAYER

www.newsplayer.com

Pity the poor lackey who had to sift through the archives of newsreel footage that form the basis of Newsplayer.com. Over 140,000 hours' worth of historic events had to be whittled down to a choice selection – but the result is spectacular.

Newsplayer, launched by cousins Barry Llewellyn and Paul Duffen in March, is a genuinely original idea. The pair have bought news clips and interviews from the last century from a variety of sources; for £25 a year, members get unlimited access to the vast Web archive.

'We chose the most unusual, entertaining and important clips from the last 100 years,' says Llewellyn, 39, who sourced the material primarily from Reuters and ITN, until Newsplayer had an average of 10 minutes' worth of clips from each week of the past century. 'Much of the older stuff had to be transferred from nitrate film – which is highly explosive – onto tape format. It was then captured and converted to four different connection speeds.'

There are 10 minutes' worth of clips from each week of the past century

The idea was conceived when the pair ran a TV consultancy firm; while sourcing clips for foreign shows, they realised they could reach the whole world at once. 'We've all seen those coffee-table books of the last century, and heard CDs of speeches. This brings them together.'

Llewellyn aims to get every school in Britain signed up; within three years, he predicts a million subscribers – 70 percent from the US.

All the clips are presented without commentary or effects, while future site innovations will include quizzes, downloads and micro-sites specialising in topics such as sport and music. And when ADSL and Web TV become an everyday reality, Newsplayer's reach will be huge.

Yesterday – it's the new tomorrow.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY, GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO.

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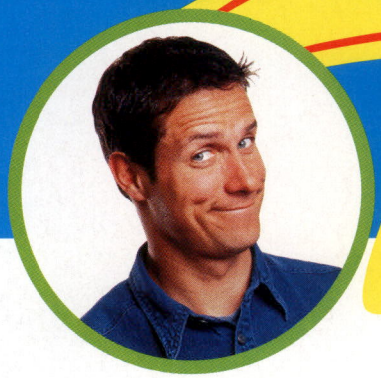

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WORDS: CLAIRE MCHATTIE; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, RICHARD LAWRENCE

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MARATHON MAN

Deck yourself out in running gear from the comfort of your home – thanks to the Web

Running tends to come into its own in the warmer summer months. That whole outdoorsy, fresh-air thing lends itself to sunshine and gentle breezes, as opposed to hailstorms and gale force winds. And the London marathon (*www.london-marathon.co.uk*) – this year on 16 April – acts as a clarion call to would-be street-pounders.

From April onwards, running emporia such as the Sweatshop are packed to capacity with would-be Sebastian Coes, all determined to kit themselves out in the finest gear money can buy. But it's not quite that straightforward – runners are being blinded with science in every area. The clothes can certainly maketh the man run faster, shaving milliseconds, if not whole seconds, from his time.

But what kit to buy? Do you suffer from over- or under-pronation, for example? (That's the way your foot strikes the ground.) Or how do you choose the latest hi-tech fabrics? Will they cause nipple chafing?

To help you through the minefield that is running apparel, we kind souls at *the net* have compiled this guide to the only attire to be seen in – and it's all available online. Decent trainers, such as these New Balance 828s, are essential. And layers of clothing are best – a thin vest-top under a thicker top made of fabric that 'wicks' away moisture from the skin is ideal.

How to choose the latest fabrics? Will they cause nipple chafing?

Meanwhile, extras – such as a wrist wallet, bottle and energy drinks – are always useful. And for the serious runner, the Polar watch to the left can download data from each run you complete into a computer.

Of course, these are only the tip of the iceberg that is the running gear industry. So for more inspiration, browse our pick of the online stores...

TRAINERS $79.99 *www.roadrunnersports.com*

HOW THE SITES COMPARE

THE SWEATSHOP *www.sweatshop.co.uk*
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Huge range of both clothes and equipment for the sports enthusiast, with runners well catered for. One-stop shopping. ★★★★

FOOTLOCKER *www.footlocker.com*
Massive site from the American giant of sports stores, with the added bonus of (much) cheaper US prices. ★★★★

ROADRUNNER *www.roadrunnersports.com*
The all-encompassing Web site of the 'biggest running store in the world' stocks all a runner needs – including pronation advice. ★★★★★

JD SPORTS *www.jdsports.co.uk*
Limited range of sportswear for sale online. ★★

SPORTS ELITE *www.sportselite.co.uk*
Features a wide variety of fitness products, including well-known brands. Also has a good selection of home exercise equipment. ★★★

SNEAKERS.COM *www.sneakers.com*
Portal for the committed fitness enthusiast that concentrates on trainers. The running section has yet to be completed, but it should be comprehensive enough for even the most ardent jogger. ★★★★

BOO.COM *www.boo.com*
A huge site for the urban sports enthusiast, boo.com caters for label-loving fitness fans and fashion victims alike. ★★★★

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And they're

In the month that the Formula One championship finally rolls into Europe, we

PAST MASTERS

It's not just the likes of Schumacher and Hakkinen who've pushed the technology of the day to the limits. Take a look at the racing heroes of yesteryear at these sites...

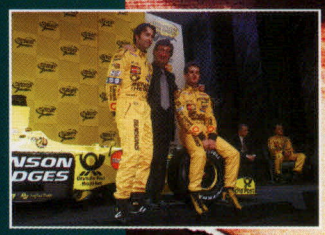
GRAND PRIX HISTORY
Essential reading. This award-winning fan's site takes visitors on a tour of past Grands Prix, plus sections devoted to great races, drivers and cars. Well designed, researched and written.
www.ddavid.com/formula1

6TH GEAR
Need to know who won the most Grands Prix between the wars? Look no further than this fan's labour of love, where history meets statistics. There are records going as far back as 1946.
www.racer.demon.nl/6thgear

BROOKLANDS
Devoted to the famous racetrack in Surrey where modern-day circuit racing started. The pages track the history of motor-racing at the venue from 1907 to the present day.
www.brooklands.org.uk

FORIX
The Formula One Results and Information Explorer is a good site for both the latest statistics and those going back to the '50s. It's thorough – in fact it's got more numbers in it than Eddie Irvine's little black book.
www.forix.com

THE TEAMS



'If it's raining, put your money on Schumacher,' is a famous Formula One cliché. Another really should be: 'If it's an F1 team site, don't expect any surprises.' Even the best of the official sites might be extremely predictable, but they're very generally good for general information about the drivers, cars, the latest news and team histories. The Prost site in particular is worth a look for its cockpit tour...

ARROWS ***www.arrows.com***
BAR ***www.britishamericanracing.com***
BENETTON ***www.benettonf1.com***
FERRARI ***www.ferrari.it***
JAGUAR ***www.jaguar-racing.com***
JORDAN ***www.jordangp.com***
MCLAREN ***www.mclaren.co.uk***
MINARDI ***www.minardi.it***
PROST ***www.prostgp.com***
SAUBER ***www.sauber.ch***
WILLIAMS ***www.bwm.williamsf1.com***

THE DRIVERS

Rubens Barrichello and Johnny Herbert might not have stood on the podium too many times, but their sites are certainly head and shoulders above those that the likes of Hakkinen and Villeneuve have to offer. The official team sites all have sections devoted to their drivers, but here's a selection of pages endorsed by the men behind the wheel.

RUBENS BARRICHELLO
Not only does Rubens kindly give us a run-down on what all those confusing marshals' flags mean, but the Brazilian also guides us around every circuit and gives the latest on his career.
www.uol.com.br/rubens barrichello/english

DAVID COULTHARD
An extremely thorough site packed with statistics and race reviews. However, it could do with a bit more about Coulthard the man, rather than the driving machine.
www.nevis.co.uk/coulthard

HEINZ-HARALD FRENTZEN
A surprisingly intimate look at Jordan's main driver, who not only personally writes about the new car, but also introduces us to his family and his girlfriend, whom he fell for while watching *Forrest Gump*. You can't get much more honest a confession than that.
www.frentzen.de

WORDS: SEAN HARGRAVE; PICTURES: ANDY WHITE, LAT

off!

trawl the Net in search of F1 fun and frolics. Gentlemen, start your engines!

F1 BABES

Make sure you don't miss out on these essential umbrella-holding crew-members.

FORMULA ONE BABES PICTURE GALLERY
Fifty – yes, 50 – galleries of beautiful pit-dwellers. Enough to make you wonder how anyone in F1 gets any work done.
come.to/F1Babes

BABES GALLERY
A selection of pages devoted to Melinda Messenger and Emma Noble, among other lovelies.
www.elecmail.demon.co.uk/babes

HORNET'S NEST
This general F1 site features a section devoted to beautiful women doing everything in their power to distract the drivers.
www.gis.net/~formula1

CALENDAR

Race fans can now log on to a site for each and every F1 circuit. A virtual tour of the track, past race highlights and the chance to buy tickets direct are typical of the goodies on offer, as well as maps and directions to get there if you fancy giving the credit card a hefty bash.

- **SAN MARINO April 9**
  www.formula.sm
- **BRITAIN April 23**
  www.silverstone-circuit.co.uk
- **SPAIN May 7**
  www.dracnet.es/circuit/index2.htm
- **EUROPE May 21**
  www.nuerburgring.de
- **MONACO June 4**
  www.monaco.mc/monaco/gprix
- **CANADA June 18**
  www.granprix.ca
- **FRANCE July 2**
  www.magnyf1.com
- **AUSTRIA July 16**
  www.a1ring.at
- **GERMANY July 30**
  www.hockenheimring.de
- **HUNGARY August 13**
  www.hungaroinfo.com/formel
- **BELGIUM August 27**
  www.spa-francorchamps.be
- **ITALY September 10**
  www.monzanet.it
- **AMERICA September 24**
  www.usgpindy.com
- **JAPAN October 8**
  www.suzukacircuit.co.jp
- **MALAYSIA October 22**
  www.malaysiangp.com.my

MIKA HAKKINEN
Spartan site courtesy of big sister Niina, whose English isn't great – anyone know a David Couldhard?
www.mikahakkinen.net

JOHNNY HERBERT
Top marks go to Johnny for uploading video clips taken on his camcorder, so fans are able to get a first-hand look at the Brit's season. Lots of news, and some features too.
www.johnnyherbert.co.uk

EDDIE IRVINE
Semi-official, lighthearted site that reveals all about 'Irv the Swerve', including a guide on how to make sure you meet Dublin's answer to Casanova. Tip number one is to be a gorgeous woman...
www.geocities.com/MotorCity/7864

MIKA SALO
Free registration gets you backstage access to the Finn's favourite recipes and rock songs.
www.mikasalo.net

THE SCHUMACHER BOYS
Once you've read the brief biographies and latest news, visitors can send a Webcard of either of the Schumachers in their cars or out skiing to a fellow fan. Anyone know Damon Hill's email address?
www.schumacher-fanclub.com

JACQUES VILLENEUVE
Useful for finding out what's being done to improve Jacques' BAR, although there's little to make us

THE PERSONALITIES

Not all of the sport's greatest characters are to be found behind the wheel. Here a selection of the kings and jokers of the F1 court.

THE DAILY DAMON
Although retired, Hill still has plenty of fans. Visit this tribute site for news, gossip, interviews and Damon's views on the current season.
www.thedaily damon.clara.net

AYRTON SENNA DA SILVA ONLINE
Tribute to the Brazilian ace killed in 1994 at Imola. There's also a shop selling a range of memorabilia including pictures, books and cars.
www.sennada silva.com

F1 COMMENTARY
Transcripts and audio from the likes of Walker and Jardine.
www.fortunecity.com/silverstone/alfa/46/index.html

THE FORMULA ONE CARTOON ARCHIVE
The personalities in F1 as you've never seen them before.
www.foca.co.uk

PENNY PITSTOP
Penny's F1 guide runs down the star signs for the drivers, with predictions such as: 'Eddie Irvine will be 1999 Champion.' Oops.
www.pennypitstop.freeserve.com

1ST CONTACT
Tribute site to Gilles Villeneuve, father of Jacques, killed during practice for the Belgian Grand Prix in 1982.
www.firstcontact.com

feel closer to the driver. However, we can always look at his season through the eyes of a cartoonist...
www.jacques.villeneuve.com

ALEX WURZ
Very thorough run-down on the new Benetton car from a site that lets you listen to .wav files of Wurz competing and testing.
www.wurz.com

FOLLOW IT LIVE

Been banned from watching lunchtime sessions in front of the TV? Don't panic – boot up, log on, and enjoy the racing live.

FORMULA 1 ONLINE
Live TV coverage of practice sessions, qualifying and races courtesy of German broadcaster RTL. Heaps of statistics and lap times.
www.f1.on.net

F1-LIVE
Real-time coverage of positions during practice and races, on a site that doubles as a news service.
www.f1-live.com

LIVE TIMING
Does exactly what it says. There's also a wealth of F1 info, detailed news and even an online casino.
www.webf1.net/live.html

THE SHOPPING ARCADE

The screaching of racing cars is often said to be the whining of millionaires emptying their wallets. So here's where big business gets its own back – flogging bits and bobs to people whose mantelpieces are crying out for scale replicas of Schumi's car and helmet.

FORMULA 1 WORLD
Huge collection of autographs, programmes, clothing and general memorabilia, catalogued into team and driver sections.
www.formulaoneworld.co.uk

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS
If it's got wheels, you can buy it here. Loads of models of current and former F1 cars, priced £18 to £1400.
www.grandprixlegends.com/f1

F1 TICKET SHOP
No prizes for guessing what this site sells. It's handy to have all the races under one roof, although prices are all in Deutschmarks.
www.f1ticketshop.com

ALL STAR GALLERY
Pictures and paintings – some autographed – available online for between £20 to £150. There's also a selection of team shirts.
www.raceart.net

THE NEXT BEST THING?

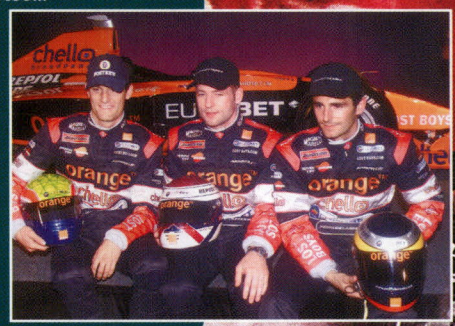
Not many of us have access to a racing car's cockpit, but thanks to PC games and the Net it's now possible to screech around realistic tracks in cars that even the pros claim handle pretty much like the real thing.

FANTASY F1
Fancy your chances at running an F1 team? Here's your chance. Pick cars, drivers and engines, then wait to see if the points come rolling in.
www.ff1beeb.com

NEWS & VIEWS

With so many drivers, teams and combinations of engines, gearboxes and tyres in Formula One, there's always a story waiting to be sniffed out. And with so many egos redlining, there are plenty of verbal fisticuffs to catch up on, too...

- *www.itv-f1.com*
- *www.formula1.com*
- *www.autosport.com*
- *www.dailyf1.com*
- *www.f1rumours.net*
- *www.f1-news.net*
- *www.f1racing.net*
- *www.race-hub.com*
- *www.totalf1.com*
- *www.formula-1.co.uk*
- *www.f1central.net*
- *www.achiew.com/f1*



CALLING CRASH FANS

Check out these crunching collisions!

THE CRASH COLLECTION
Photos and footage.
come.to/f1_crashes

MOTOR SPORTS PICTURES PAGE
Highlights include Brundle upside-down.
www.geocities.com/MotorCity/Speedway/7407

FORMULA ONE CRASH SITE
This fan's site is packed with devastation – captions would be useful, though.
home.wish.net/~franroan/F1menu.html

THE SCHUMACHER MOTORHOMEPAGE
Video downloads of the famous collision in 1997 with Villeneuve at Jerez, and the 1994 and 1995 crashes with our very own Damon Hill.
surf.to/schumacher

EA SPORTS
The eagerly awaited *F1 2000* game claims to be as close to an F1 car as you get. Judge for yourself here.
www.easportsf12000.com

F1 GAMES FOR PC
Not the fanciest site, but every big F1 game comes in for a brutally honest review – making sure you avoid wasting money on the equivalent of a BAR.
www.angelfire.com/on3/F1games

GRAND PRIX MANAGER 2
Pretend you're Frank Williams or Eddie Jordan. Race commentator Jackie Stewart reveals how well or badly you are doing.
www.microprose.com/gamesdesign/gpmanager2

PAEONY GAMES
If you don't have any racing computer games, log on here and take on the stars of Formula 1. Basic, but fun – and free.
www.paeonygames.com

FEATURES AND E-ZINES

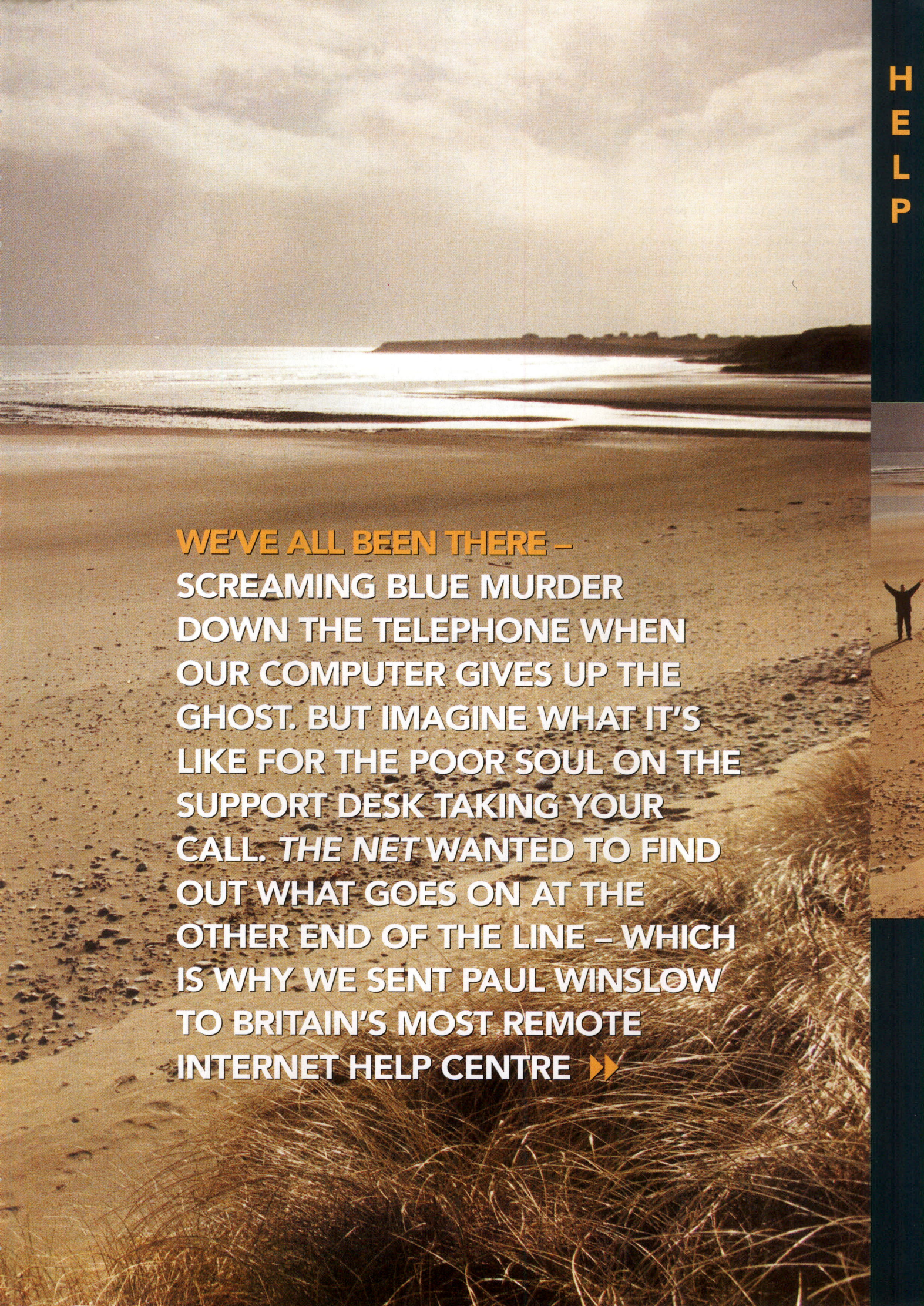
Despite what you might think, F1 isn't just about who went a hundredth of a second faster in practice than someone else. To prove it, there are plenty of sites that offer more general features, games and chat, as well as hard-hitting news coverage.

- *www.autosportmag.com*
- *www.itv-f1.com*
- *www.cygnetf1.com*
- *www.formula1.co.uk*
- *www.atlasf1.com*
- *www.f1racing.co.uk*
- *www.motorsport.com*
- *www.f1express.com*

F1 CHAT

Ever gone to a chat site only to find most people there had very little of interest to talk about? That's not normally a problem with F1 – thanks to crashes, victories, personalities, slagging sessions and bruised egos. Watch out, however: some fans have become very attached to their heroes and can sometimes turn to the 'Caps Lock' button to make their point.

- *www.f1chat.net*
- *www.atlasf1.com/chat*
- *www.racelink.com/RC*
- *www.f1-live.com/GB/FORUM*
- *www.chat.f1central.net*
- *www.ten-tenths.com*
- *rec.autos.sport.f1*



WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE – SCREAMING BLUE MURDER DOWN THE TELEPHONE WHEN OUR COMPUTER GIVES UP THE GHOST. BUT IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR THE POOR SOUL ON THE SUPPORT DESK TAKING YOUR CALL. *THE NET* WANTED TO FIND OUT WHAT GOES ON AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE – WHICH IS WHY WE SENT PAUL WINSLOW TO BRITAIN'S MOST REMOTE INTERNET HELP CENTRE

Jan Schouten gets excited about the idea of going out to cut peat for the fire. He lives in a place where it can get so windy that if a dog isn't on a lead, it can literally blow away. Where, if the ferry doesn't make it into port, the supermarket doesn't stock any food. A land where power cuts are so common, they hardly rate a raised eyebrow. Jan might sound like the hero of a Robert Louis Stevenson novel, but he's actually the Dutch-born manager of a hi-tech NetCentre offering telephone technical support for members of the British ISP, Madasafish. And he lives and works on the Isle of Lewis, most northern of the Hebrides, off the north-west coast of Scotland.

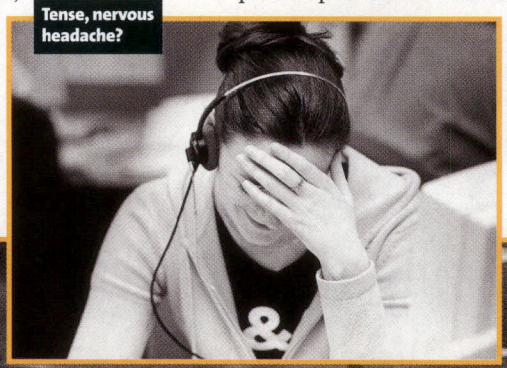
When first told I was going to be writing a feature on the everyday goings-on of an Internet help desk, I didn't envisage having to make the trip to Stornoway ('capital' of the Isle of Lewis) to conduct my research. In my mind's eye, I pictured the place as mile after mile of moorland with houses dotted around, an abundance of sheep, a lack of trees and howling gales. It just goes to show that sometimes I can be uncannily correct in my assumptions, because that's exactly what I found.

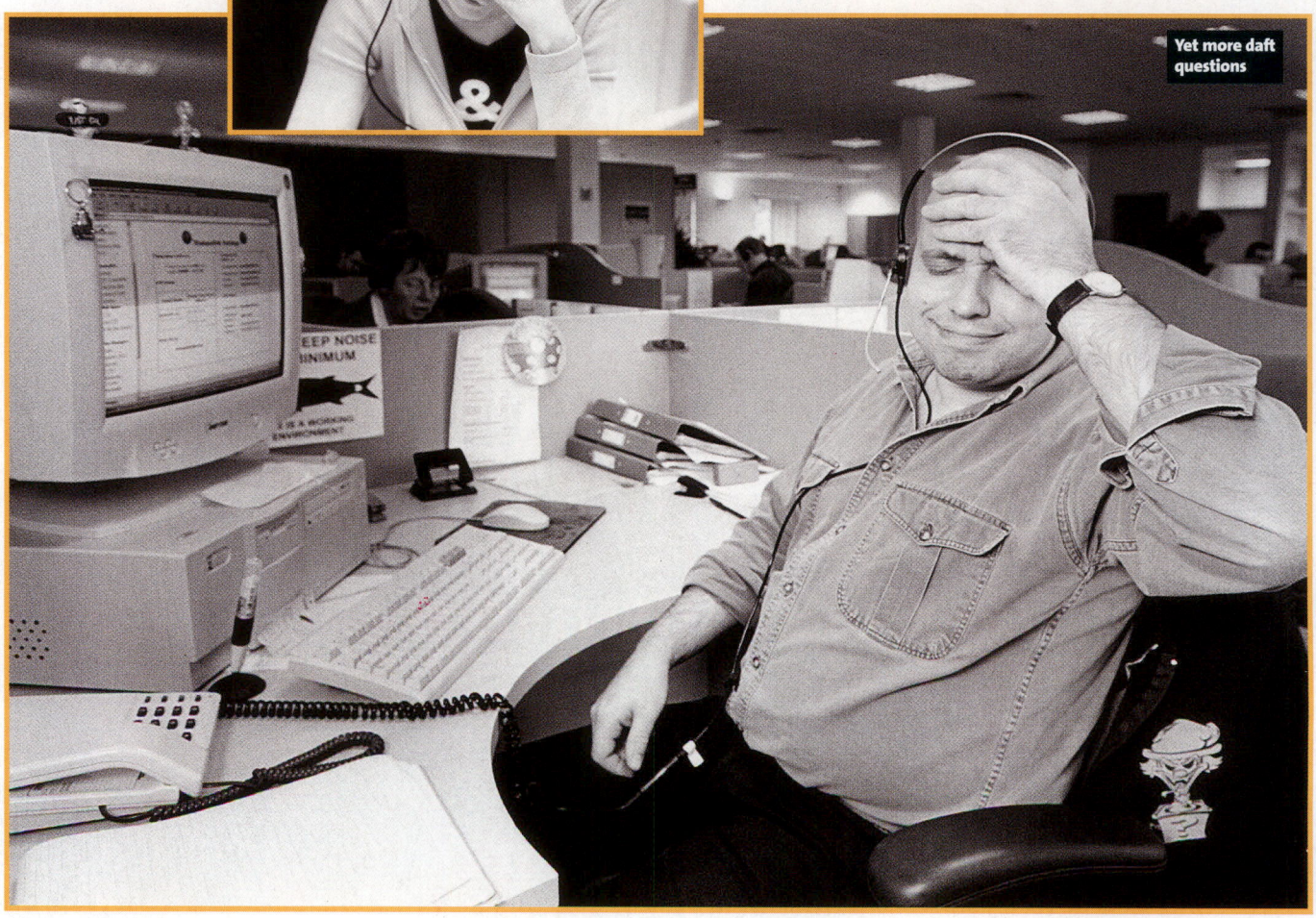
Why the hell had they decided to set up on this remote outpost of Britain? Why would IT professionals choose to live in such a place? Would the locals have enough IT knowledge to get the rest of Britain online? I'd soon find out...

I was met at the airport (for 'airport', read 'ex-bomber base with huge landing strip and a hut doubling as arrival and departure lounge') and driven to the hotel, before being picked up for dinner with some of the NetCentre staff. All were genuinely nice people and had an enthusiasm for their work that would shame ebullient Sky Sports commentator Andy Gray. Where else in the world can someone get as excited about going out to cut his own peat as he is about building Web sites for his customers?

If one man reflects that enthusiasm, it's team leader Kevin Melia. Kevin used to be a car mechanic in his native Leeds, but became bored and moved to the island with his wife, who was born there. A few months later he heard about the NetCentre, and, as a computer nut, decided he fancied

Why the hell had they decided to set up on this remote outpost of Britain?


Tense, nervous headache?


Yet more daft questions

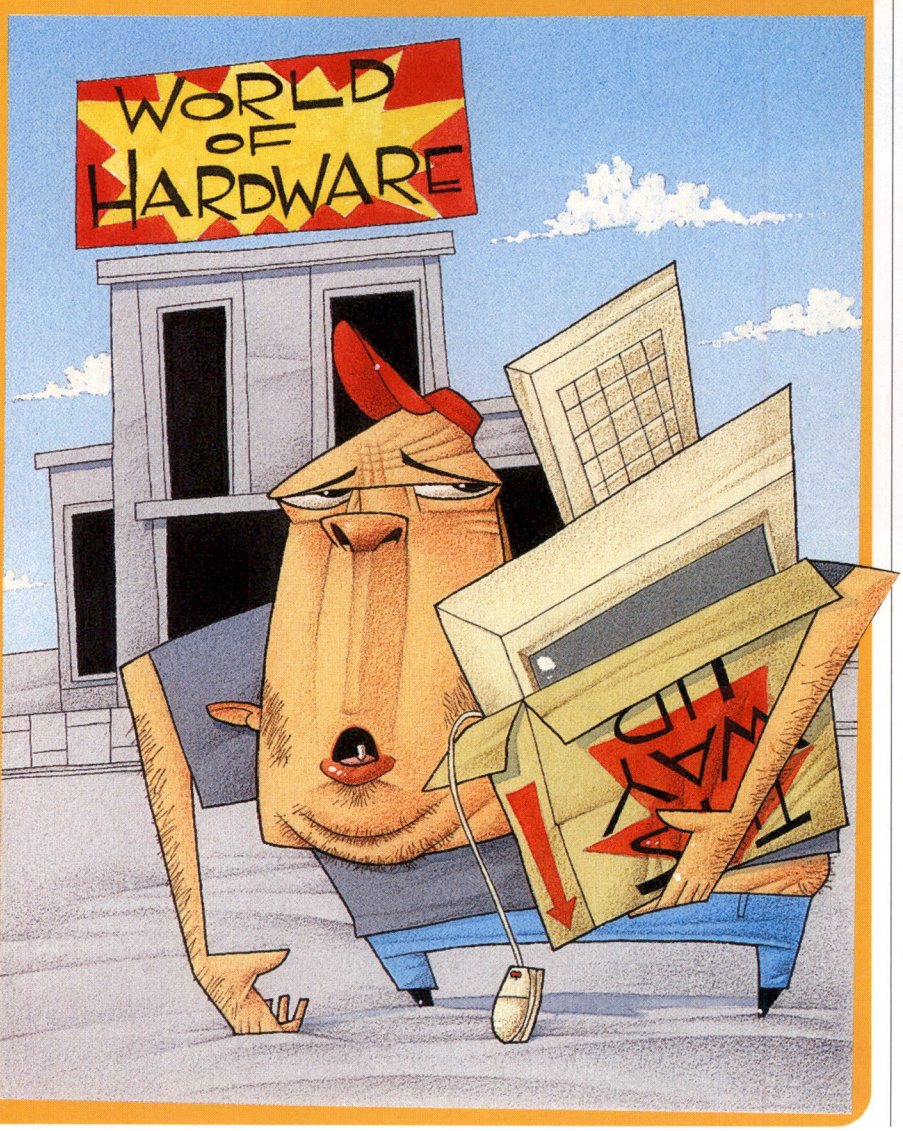
PICTURES: HUGO DIXON; ILLUSTRATIONS: KEVIN FEBRUARY

HELP DESK HORROR A taped call from WordPerfect Customer Support

Ridge Hall computer assistance; may I help you?
I'm having trouble with WordPerfect. I was typing, and suddenly the words went away.
Went away?
They disappeared.
So what does your screen look like now?
Nothing.
Nothing?
It's blank. It won't accept anything when I type.
Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?
How do I tell?
Can you see the C-prompt on the screen?
What's a sea-prompt?
Never mind. Can you move your cursor around the screen?
There isn't any cursor.
Does your monitor have a power indicator light?
What's a monitor?
It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV.
I can't see an indicator light.

'Does your monitor have a power indicator?' 'What's a monitor?'

Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?
Yes, I think so.
Great. Follow the cord to the plug and tell me if it's plugged into the wall.
Yes, it is.
When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?
No.
Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable. Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer.
I can't reach.
Well, can you see if it is?
No. It's too dark.
Dark?
Yes – the office light is off.
Well, turn on the office light then.
I can't. There's a power failure.
A power... a power failure? Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes your computer came in?
Well, yes, I keep them in the closet.
Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from.
Really? Is it that bad?
Yes, I'm afraid it is.
Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?
Tell them you're too f*ing stupid to own a computer.**

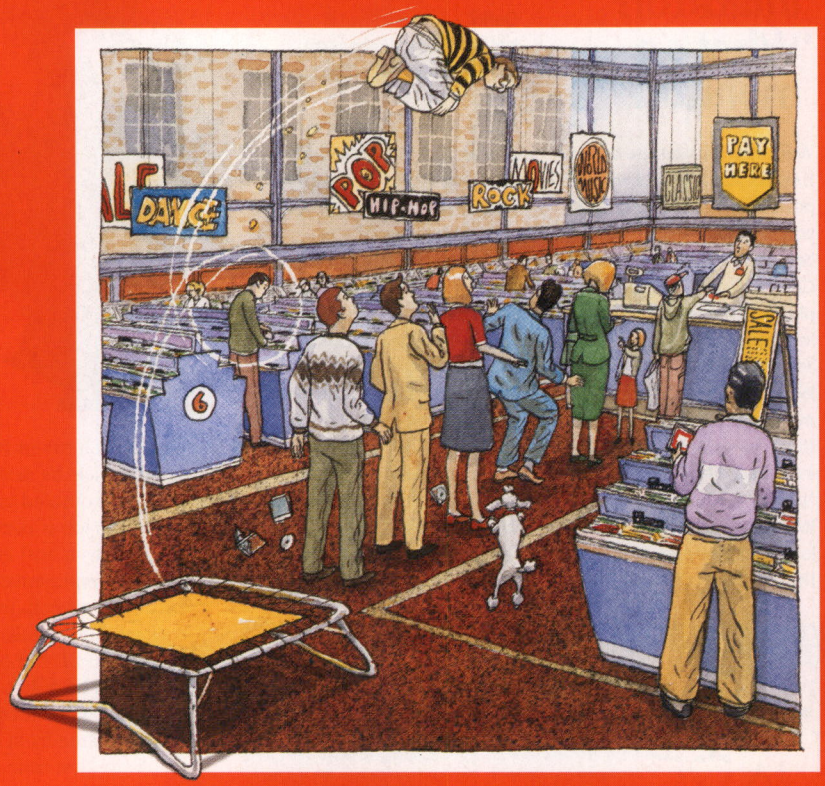


the idea of a career in telephone support. To coin a phrase he never looked back, and was recently promoted to team leader. And his love of the job is permanently obvious.

Kevin has a host of funny stories to tell about his experiences at Madasafish. One customer was convinced his username was 'Packard Bell', while another rang for an installation CD but couldn't give Kevin his number as he didn't have a phone – a bit of a problem when it comes to going online. That call came from a phone box, and it wasn't the first time a punter had rung from a payphone. Kevin once took a customer through a step-by-step process assuming the guy was completing the commands on his computer; it turned out the customer was in a call box. But for real comedy you can't beat the bloke who rang up to complain that when he'd put the Madasafish CD in his Sony PlayStation, the game was crap...

One customer was truly convinced that his username was Packard Bell

It's tempting to say that Kevin's zeal owes much to that fact that there's nothing better to do in Stornoway; however, he obviously loves the place as much as he does his job. But that doesn't explain why the NetCentre was built on the island. You can locate a help centre anywhere you like, as long as it has phone lines, so why Stornoway? Salaries aren't any cheaper – the staff are paid rates comparable to a similar centre in Glasgow. However, anyone developing a business on the Isle of Lewis is welcomed with open arms. They're offered grants as an incentive to create jobs and provide training for the islanders. The NetCentre also benefits from a particularly low staff turnover: the people who work there don't want to live anywhere else and there are no competing IT employers, so they stay where they are. Therefore Madasafish



GET DIRECTLY TO THE MUSIC.

BOX MAN

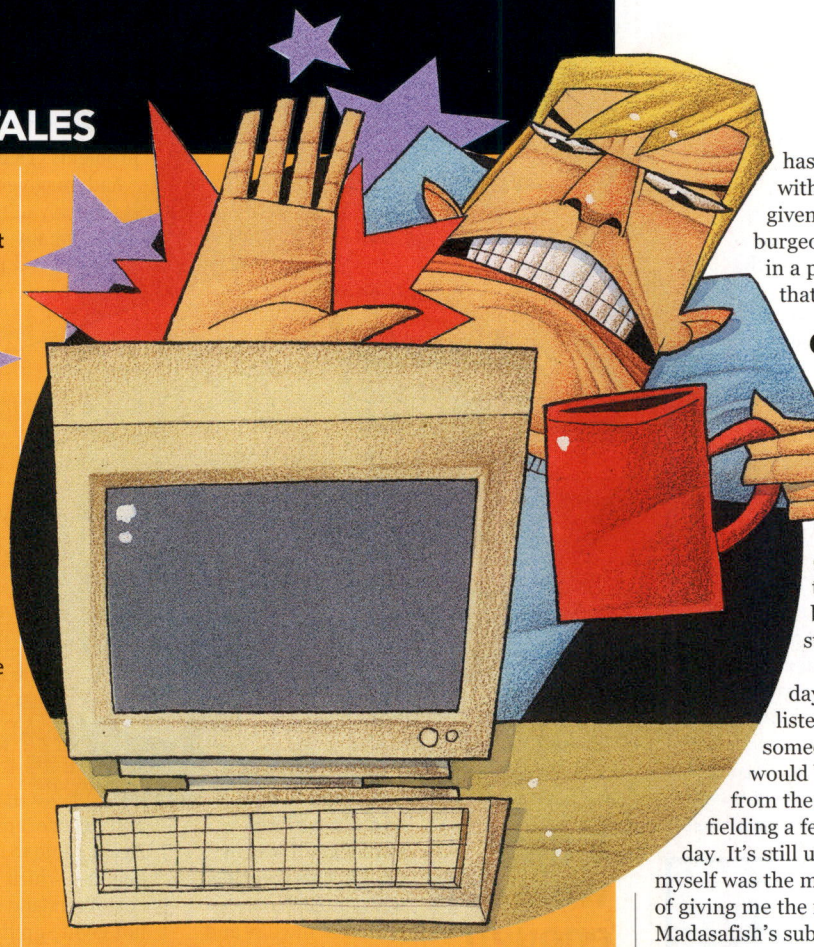
www.boxman.co.uk

e-ffortless shopping online.

Avoid the High Street and take a shortcut to aural satisfaction.
Visit our website and choose from 500,000 CDs at consistently competitive prices.
Boxman, e-ntertainment e-volution.

MORE TALL TALES

Life on the tech support desk is never easy. If it's not people insisting their CD drive is in fact a coffee-cup holder, it's people putting installation CDs into their stereos then complaining that they can't hear the instructions. Believe it or not, the above two examples are absolutely true – and so are this little lot...



CASE ONE

'A customer called up once complaining that he hadn't been able to use his software for six months. The technician was trying to find out what the problem was when the customer suddenly said, "Well I've had your software for the past six months, but I only just got a computer!"'

CASE TWO

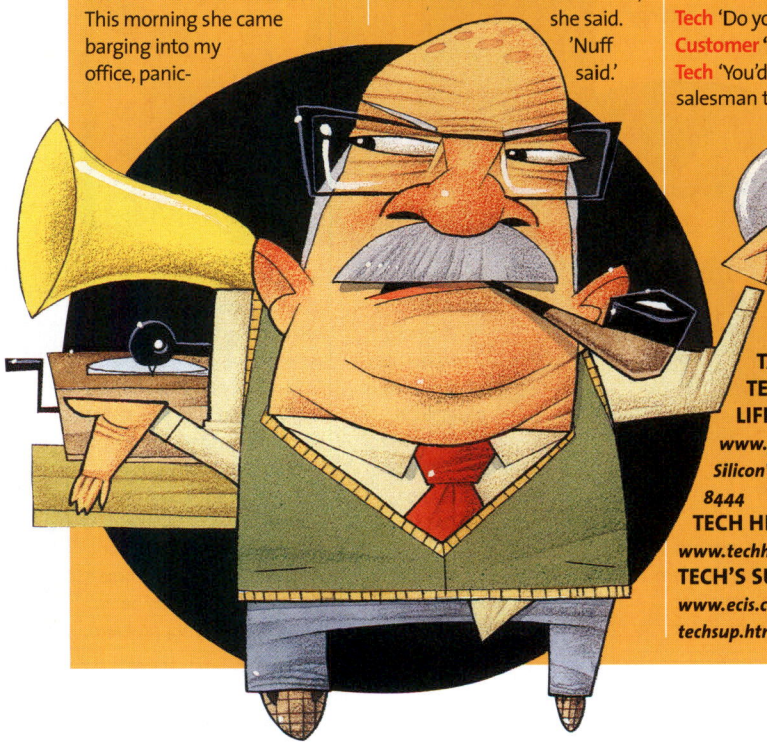
'A customer calls Technical Support saying that they are unable to connect to us over the Internet. Unable to find the customer in our call tracking software, the technician begins to question the customer, to which the customer replies: "No I'm not enrolled, I just made up things when it asked for Log-on and Password."'

CASE THREE

'We're currently in the process of moving from an antiquated mail system to one with all the latest bells and whistles. Yesterday I installed the new software on a user's PC and showed her how to use it. This morning she came barging into my office, panic-stricken and frantic. "All the mail I saved in one of my folders is gone!!!"

'I asked her which folder she had saved it to. "Deleted Items," she said. 'Nuff said.'

Some people insist that their CD drive is a holder for their coffee cup

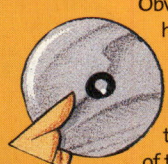


CASE FOUR

User **'The disk won't go into the drive.'**
Rep 'OK, maybe you have upside-down. Let's turn it over and try again.'
User **'The disk or the computer?'**

CASE FIVE

Customer **'I've got a modem and it came with your software. The salesman said this is all I need; how do I set it up?'**
Tech 'Put the disk in the drive.'
Customer **'What drive?'**
Tech 'Do you have a computer?'
Customer **'No.'**
Tech 'You'd better go ask the salesman to set you up, then. Obviously he knows something the rest of the world doesn't.'



TAKEN FROM:
TECH SUPPORT LIFE ON THE PHONES
www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Foothills/8444
TECH HELL
www.techhell.com
TECH'S SUPPORT
www.ecis.com/~weasel/support/techsup.html

has a subsidised new business, with staff happy to have been given a chance to work in a burgeoning industry, while living in a place they love. It's a set-up that seems to work very well.

GOING IT ALONE

Once I'd got my head round that concept, it was time to tour the centre. To say that Madasafish's modern edifice was at odds with the island's traditional buildings would be a considerable understatement.

Then, after spending the day meandering around and listening in on a few calls, someone seemed to think it would be a good idea if I, new boy from the Smoke, actually had a go at fielding a few calls – on only my second day. It's still unclear whether Kevin or myself was the more daunted by the prospect of giving me the responsibility of keeping Madasafish's subscribers happy.

It usually takes a few days' training before they let anyone loose on the phones. I had an hour. First came a crash-course in using their telephone reporting system, and then I was paired with Callum MacLean to learn my trade as a Customer Service Agent in record time. Callum is another who was born on the mainland but moved to the island to be with his wife. He knows a few stories, too: he once had a call from a woman who was convinced that her password was '******' because that was what appeared in the password field on her screen.

Callum had a call from a woman who was convinced that her password was '****'**

I started off just listening in to the calls he took, which was easy. Then the Powers That Be decided I could move onto the computer to fill in the details of a call while Callum was talking to the customer. This meant nothing more strenuous than typing in names, the nature of the problem and what advice was given. So far, so good; nothing too difficult. At least, not as long as Callum kept pointing frantically at the bit of the screen I should be clicking on. As my performance had become something of a sideshow in the office for anyone who wasn't busy, it wasn't long before hints were dropped that I should start taking calls myself. I wasn't keen. Although I

had enough knowledge to know what Callum was talking about when he took his calls, it was a while since I had used PCs to dial-up, and I wasn't familiar with all the programs customers were using. While I was confident I could correct the type of faults people were reporting if I was sitting at their machine, the difficulty would be envisaging what the customer was seeing, and giving out instructions from a (considerable) distance.

However, if they were daft enough to let me have a go, I was daft enough to do it – so Callum flicked a switch and I was live. Luckily this coincided with the quietest period of the day and I wasn't bothered by any calls for a while, so instead I was inundated with fake calls from within the office from imaginary customers with imaginary problems. Thanks a lot, guys. But if Callum had imagined he could take it easy, he was quickly mistaken. I've never seen so many notes scribbled so quickly on a pad of paper as he tried desperately to let me know what I should be saying.

Still, I managed to get through a few fake calls and prove myself at least a little bit capable. Which was just as well, considering that calls from real customers soon started coming across. I managed to bluff my way through several problems, and would like to take this opportunity to thank the subscribers I 'dealt' with for their patience.

At this point Callum decided it was time for a coffee-break, and my short career as a Customer Service Agent came to an end almost before it had begun – which was doubtless a relief for customers and staff alike. Let's just say I'm not giving up the day-job yet. And the next time I have to call a helpline, I'll be the best and most polite customer ever.

If they were daft enough to let me have a go, I was daft enough to do it

MADASAFISH

Madasafish is a lifestyle ISP aimed at the Net generation of teens to thirtysomethings. Its portal offers proprietary content as well as news feeds, which means it's not just a mish-mash of content nabbed from other sites.

While many free ISPs charge as much as £1 a minute for calls made to technical support, calls to Madasafish are charged at national call rates – less than 4p a minute off-peak. This means you can get your problem solved without breaking the bank. ***www.madasafish.com***

Mad as fish!

The Queen Mum loved to sketch

THE CHECKLIST Read this before you reach for the phone...

Most calls made to a help desk are easily solved, which means that with a bit of forethought you can sort out a lot of things yourself. Although calls to Madasafish are charged at national call rates, some other ISPs cost as much as £1 a minute; but whoever you're with you'll save money by doing things yourself. Here are fixes for the most frequent problems.

GET ONLINE HELP

If you can get online, check out the support offered on your ISP's Web site. The standard of online support differs from ISP to ISP, but you might be able to find the answer or look at a diagram of what you are supposed to be doing.

DIAL-UP DISASTER!

Check your dial-up details if you're struggling to connect to the Internet – you might have inadvertently changed your settings. You need to check the phone number you are dialling into, the DNS servers, your username and password. This information should have been provided when you first signed up. On a PC you can confirm these details by going into Internet Options within the Control Panels and checking the properties of the relevant connections. On a Mac you should use the Remote Access (OS8.5+) or PPP control panel.

NO EMAIL?

Check your email settings. Depending on which type of email software you use, there will be an Options or Preferences section which holds the settings for your email. If you're still struggling, make sure the SMTP (outgoing) and POP3 (incoming) mail servers are correct.

MODEM CONTROL

Check your modem settings if you can't get online, because your computer might not recognise your modem. They should be in the Modem Control Panel, whether you're on a PC or a Mac.

'You're free now, my beauty!'

AND...

- Finally, make sure everything is plugged in.
- If you have to call the help desk, take it easy on the person you're about to speak to.
- If possible, sit at your computer when you call.
- Know what hardware and software you are using.
- Let them know what you were trying to do, and where it went wrong.
- Remember these people are trying to help you, so try not to get angry with them.
- Write down any error messages that occur.
- If you have to call the help desk back, remember who you spoke to the first time – they'll already be up to speed with your problem.

PICTURES: PA, HULTON GETTY

"cheaper calls with an online account, that's my kind of screensaver!"

national calls from 1.7p

internet access from 0.75p

india 40p

germany 7p

australia 6p

france 7p

usa 4p

www.prestophone.com

★ apply online today and get 100 free talk minutes!*

prestophone

per second billing

no subscription fees

view charges & top up your account online

low mobile rates

no cheques to write

keep your own phone and number

No wonder everyone's talking about prestophone. Not only can you enjoy ***savings of up to 83%*** on ***international calls*** and ***55%*** on ***national calls**** but because it's a ***complete web-based service*** you'll also enjoy the hassle-free convenience of running your ***account online.*** What's more, it's free to join and is ***just a click away.***

*Savings based on BT's peak standard rates before discounts/promotions. Prices effective from 1st April 2000. Rates include VAT. Calls charged per second after first 30 seconds. Rates are charged in pence units. Above rates available to customers opening a prepaid super saver account with £30.00 and over, and on any subsequent top up of £30.00 and over. The above rate of Internet access

SPACE AGE
SALE
NOW ON!
All Prices Reduced

HE WEARS CLOTHES FROM ROKIT: ROKIT@EASYNET.CO.UK; JEANS & TRAINERS FROM RETRO MAN: WWW.BUY-SELL-TRADE.CO.UK; SHE WEARS CLOTHES FROM ROKIT; BOOTS FROM RETRO WOMAN

THE SALE THAT NEVER ENDS

For '70s shoppers, snapping up bargain hardware meant a night spent on the pavement and beef tea for breakfast. But now, the Internet brings us discounted DVD players 365 days a year!

SONY DVP-S7700
LIST PRICE: £800
***www.av-store.co.uk* £635**
SAVE £165!

'RIP-OFF BRITAIN'. It's a tabloid cliché. If you believe the hype, we hapless consumers pay through the nose for everything from cars to jeans – and especially for anything remotely technological, like audiovisual kit.

The truth is different. Savvy consumers have been buying electronic goods by mail-order for years, picking up mainstream brands of tellies, hi-fi and videos at discounted prices. And now the mail-order specialist companies are moving online. It's only logical: the Internet reaches more punters more rapidly, prices can be refreshed daily and it's easier to manage stock and respond quickly to demand.

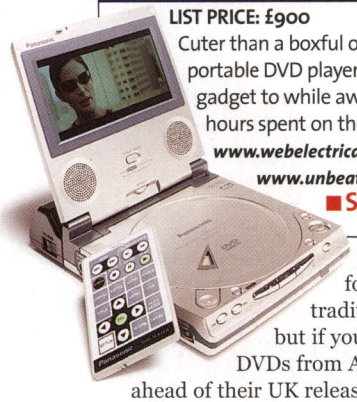
Additional savings are available because online retailers operate with minimal overheads. According to Amarjit Singh of Empire Direct, it's simple economics: thanks to low operating costs, he can undercut more traditional stores. Empire Direct doesn't have to worry about company cars, reps, store-frontage or a regiment of shop assistants; all they need is an effective site, with phone operatives for anyone shy of ordering over the Internet, backed up by relatively low-cost warehousing.

That means there's never been a better time to shop for audiovisual gear. Buy online and you'll typically save a whopping 20 percent off high-street prices on DVD players, audio systems – even esoteric hi-fi separates. Then enjoy the luxury of having your purchases delivered to your door, rather than having to lug boxes through the rain on your way to the car park.

DVD DECODED

So the operations are legit, but the products are dodgy, right? End-of-line items, reconditioned manufacturer-return stock, grey imports? Wrong. In 99 percent of cases, the hardware you buy is absolutely identical to the gear you'd pick up on the high street. And online retailers are more upfront about the hottest topic among film fans: defeating the Regional Coding system found in DVD players. You won't find a decoded DVD

PANASONIC DV-L50 PORTABLE



LIST PRICE: £900

Cuter than a boxful of puppies, this portable DVD player is just the gadget to while away those long hours spent on the train.

www.webelectricals.co.uk £730

www.unbeatable.co.uk £720

■ **SAVE £180!**

player openly for sale in most traditional stores; but if you want to watch DVDs from America months ahead of their UK release (see panel, page 52), buy your player online.

Why can't you simply buy an American disc and play it on an unadapted machine? At Hollywood's insistence, DVD movies contain an embedded digital protection system called a Region Code. This operates whenever you insert a disc into a player; the code on the disc looks for a 'handshake' from the player, and if the two are incompatible, then the disc refuses to play. There are six zones, but the ones of interest are Europe (Region Code 2) and USA (Region Code 1).

Regional Coding exists solely to preserve the staggered release system. For example, *The Blair Witch Project* was first shown in UK cinemas on 29 October 1999. It was available on DVD in the US one week earlier. Without Regional Coding, British punters could have viewed their very own copies of the movie without standing in line at the local multiplex – and this, of course, is not what Hollywood wants.

However, almost from the introduction of Regional Coding, hackers and technologically-savvy users have been working on ways to get around this restrictive practice. There are currently three solutions – and all are completely legal. The first is chip modification. If you already own a DVD player, you can purchase a replacement 'chipset' that allows you to select the Region Code zone you need. This costs around £50. It invalidates the warranty on your player, but the major companies performing the work offer their own warranties. For details, see ***www.linkonline.co.uk*** or ***www.techtronics.com***.

The second is chipset adjustment. Certain DVD players can have their Region Code chipsets adjusted without any need for replacement; all that's required is a 'hack', usually accomplished via your remote handset. For details, check out ***www.dvd-debate.com*** and read 'handset hacks'.

Regional Coding exists solely to preserve staggered film releases

The third way is to use your computer as a DVD player – assuming you have a DVD-ROM drive – and get hold of a

DENON AVR-330

LIST PRICE: £800

Big, beefy home cinema receiver that has bags of power, cutting-edge surround sound processing and all the facilities every movie nutter could ever need.

www.empiredirect.co.uk £660

■ **SAVE £140!**

Denon: cool sounds from a daft-sounding company

DVD PLAYERS

1 YAMAHA DVDS795

LIST PRICE: £529.99

Big, sophisticated, with loads of facilities including Dolby Digital, this is a great way to upgrade a basic Pro-Logic home cinema amp. Other plus points include a top-quality picture and a clean-cut fascia.

www.empiredirect.co.uk £437.99

■ **SAVE £92!**

2 TOSHIBA SD-3109

LIST PRICE: £400

Laden with features, most notably a twin-tray mechanism that lets you load two discs at once. As with all Toshibas the SD-3109 has fantastic picture quality, but it isn't so hot as a CD player.

www.richersounds.com £350

www.bedirect.co.uk £330

www.unbeatable.co.uk £310

■ **SAVE £90!**

3 TOSHIBA SD-2109

LIST PRICE: £300

Not exactly laden with bells and whistles, but the picture performance more than makes up for it – Toshiba's SD-2109 is as good as affordable DVD players get.

www.bedirect.co.uk £230

www.unbeatable.co.uk £229

■ **SAVE £71!**

4 PIONEER DV-525

LIST PRICE: £300

More hi-fi orientated than Toshiba's 2109, the Pioneer is a better player of CDs, making it a wiser choice for anyone looking for sweet, sweet music as well as film fun. The picture isn't quite as good as the audio, though.

www.webelectricals.co.uk £284

www.unbeatable.co.uk £242

■ **SAVE £58!**

5 SONY DVP-S7700

LIST PRICE: £800

Sony's flagship DVD player offers excellent picture and sound quality, as well as bullet-proof build. Like all DVD machines it'll double up as a CD player, and this is where the Sony scores over its budget rivals: it's as superlative with digital music as it is handling movies.

www.bedirect.co.uk £698

www.webelectricals.co.uk £678

www.av-store.co.uk £635

■ **SAVE £165!**

TOP AUDIOVISUAL SITES

Looking for bargains? Look no further...

THE AV STORE

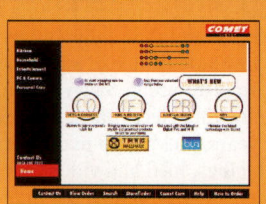
www.av-store.co.uk

This should be your first port of call for all things Sony. The AV Store sells the Japanese giant's finest, and nothing else. There's a range of over 1,000 products to choose from, and prices are exceptionally good. Usefully, the site also sells a code-free modification that will fit any DVD player (£49).

BUY ELECTRICAL DIRECT

www.bedirect.co.uk

A speedy, easy-to-use site that doesn't look particularly pretty, but which offers an extensive range of products. It's part of the Which? Web Trader scheme and delivery is free. If you've got an Egg credit card, use it here and get two percent cashback on every purchase.



COMET

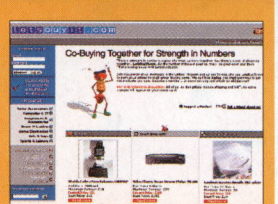
www.comet.co.uk

Comet's new emphasis is on price-cutting. This site is true to form, with some good (but not spectacular) deals. Being Comet, the site offers not only audio and video, but also washing machines and other white goods. The only real gripe is that the site is almost *too* pretty...and so is very, very slow to navigate.

EMPIRE DIRECT

www.empiredirect.co.uk

The place to go for proper hi-fi kit, with an extensive range of quality-brand components. Its rapid search engine is one of the best, but the actual layout is fairly mundane – so unless you know what exactly you're looking for it's not the easiest site to browse. Prices, however, are very competitive.



LET'S BUY IT

www.letsbuyit.com

Let's Buy It is based on collective bargaining: the site finds people interested in the same product then negotiates a bulk-buy deal. The downsides are obvious – if you want something fairly obscure you've got bugger-all chance here, and the process can take around two weeks. Still, worth a look.

WORDS: ANDY KERR; OPENING PICTURE: STEVE ORINO; STYLING: PROPPED UP; STILL LIVES: NICK WRIGHT

1
YAMAHA
NATURAL SOUND DVD PLAYER DVD-S795
DVD / VIDEO CD / CD
2
TOSHIBA
DUAL DISC SYSTEM
3
TOSHIBA
DVD VIDEO PLAYER SD-2109
4
Pioneer DVD PLAYER DV-525
PAL/NTSC
5
SONY
DVD/CD/VIDEO CD
MATRIX
PHONE LEVEL
PHONES
DNR
PREV
NEXT
SET UP
DTS

software fix. You can download software that allows you to change a DVD-ROM's Region Coding from ***www.multimania.com/hollywoodplus***. Have a look at ***www2.datatestlab.com/regionhacks***, too. In a very few cases your drive will demand a 'handshake' before even booting the disc, making it more resistant to decoding, but at ***www.visualdomain.net*** you can find hardware upgrades that will get past the issue. However, such a change automatically invalidates your computer's warranty.

Now, here comes the science part. If you go the PC route, you'll want to connect your DVD-ROM drive to your TV. But it isn't as easy as you'd think. If you have a hardware decoder in your PC you'll likely have a video output card, which will have stereo audio outputs. These can be connected into your TV via the front 'AV' sockets, or by adaptor to the scart jack at the rear. But this is only a composite video signal, which is of lower quality than the RGB (red/green/blue) signal a normal 'hi-fi' style player offers.

Note the prices of kit so you can compare them to online offers

The alternative is to buy a TV scan converter. This will connect to your PC's VGA output, and will convert the video signal into something your TV can use. But it's pricey – buy a decent PC display card instead.

WHAT (AND WHERE) TO BUY

We've tracked down some examples of the sort of hardware bargains you can find online, plus 10 of the biggest online stores. If you want to go your own way, do your homework – get advice from ***www.whathifi.com*** on what kit best suits your needs. Remember to note the 'actual' prices so you can compare them to the online offers.

KENWOOD NV-600 MINI SYSTEM

LIST PRICE: £600

The NV-600 sounds as good as it looks, and the CD, radio and cassette are controlled by one of the coolest handsets out there.

www.empiredirect.co.uk £495

www.unbeatable.co.uk £399.97

■ SAVE £200!

Manhattan in ultraviolet was quite beautiful

PIONEER NS-DV1 HOME CINEMA

LIST PRICE: £1,500

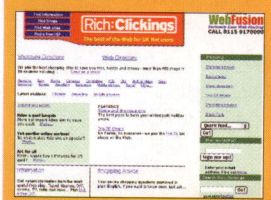
This Pioneer is a complete hi-fi and home cinema system. The slinky silver main unit contains a DVD drive for playing both CDs and DVD movies, Dolby Digital surround sound processing, and a radio. A touchscreen remote handset and a separate, wall-hanging display complete the package.

www.unbeatable.co.uk £1,182

■ SAVE £318!

TOP AUDIOVISUAL SITES

Our hunt for the places to nab bargains – continued



RICH CLICKINGS

www.richclickings.co.uk

A resource rather than an actual sales site, but equally useful. Rich Clickings is a great place to look for independent reviews of shopping sites and can, on occasion, be brutally honest. Definitely worth checking out for places to go – and, more importantly, not to go – when browsing.

RICHER SOUNDS

www.richersounds.com

The king of hi-fi bargains does a decent job online – and the site is a breeze to navigate. You won't find tellies here, but the range of hi-fi kit is pretty good. The only downside is that often the object of your desire isn't in stock – you may need to visit a few times to get what you want. Delivery is £7.

SHOPSMART

www.shopsmart.com

Not a shop outlet at all, but a useful place to bookmark nonetheless. Shopsmart is a massive shopping guide which lists not products, but places to find products, and it has a huge database of online retailers. Enter a product genre and the site can display the 10 most competitive deals that day.

UNBEATABLE

www.unbeatable.co.uk

Exceptional prices and a vast array of stock. Unbeatable deals largely with mainstream brands. Delivery is efficient and ordering very secure. Our only gripe is that the search engine is not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but type in a brand and what you want should turn up. Other than that, excellent.

WEB ELECTRICALS

www.webelectricals.co.uk

This site is more classy to look at and easier to use than most, and it's also a member of the Which? Web Trader scheme. Web Electricals might be a neat and effective site; the prices, however, although OK, are not in the exceptional category by any means. At least delivery is free of charge.

Ammirati Puris Lintas

For further information or a dealer list, call 08 00/21 53 15 or visit www.vdodayton.com

Some cars are just faster than others. Thanks to VDO Dayton Navigation Systems.

VDO Dayton Navigation Systems. Get there in record time. With high-speed calculation and precise vocal guiding for the quickest routes. Making you faster, even without 350 bhp under your bonnet.

Car Multimedia Systems.

VDO dayton

VDO Dayton. The Car Brand.

SPEAKERS

MISSION 702E
LIST PRICE: £200
Neat floorstanding loudspeakers that offer a winning blend of bass presence and punch, yet aren't excessively big. Ideal as a first step up from those dinky bookshelf speakers you went to college with.
www.empiredirect.co.uk £165
■ **SAVE £35!**

KEF CRESTA 2
LIST PRICE: £150
These compact KEFs are nothing radical in terms of design, but the attention to detail and quality of build means that they're amongst the best budget speakers available.
www.empiredirect.co.uk £124
www.unbeatable.co.uk £107
■ **SAVE £43!**

No riff-raff got past the giant speaker bouncers

DVD USA

dvdexpress.com: more entertaining than *Waterworld*

Hollywood likes to stagger the release rates of films around the world, meaning that a flop movie can occasionally be rescued by clever marketing. *Waterworld* was a case in point: a disaster in the US, it actually picked up greater returns as it played around the globe. Also, it saves money; fewer prints of a movie are required, since the industry only has to strike enough to serve each market in turn. That's why films come out in the US first – and so do DVDs.

Why not import DVD discs direct from the Land of the Free? It's legal, as long as the discs are for your personal use. Keep the orders small – under £36 – and you'll avoid paying duty; any more and you'll have to stump up for import taxes.

For more details, the entire current UK Customs position is set out at ***www.hmce.gov.uk/notices/143.htm.***

But why go to the effort of importing your home entertainment? Here's why: films like *The Sixth Sense*, *Three Kings* and *Dogma* are already available in the US, prices are comparable with what we pay, and p&p is around $7 per item or five discs at about $17.

Happy viewing!

- ***www.dvdexpress.com***
- ***www.kencranes.com***
- ***www.reel.com***
- ***www.absolutedvd.co.uk***

As for actually making your purchase – well, don't have nightmares. Buying online is far safer than some would have you believe – check out the top tips in our 'Retail Therapy' section (pages 62-63). Places like Shopsmart (***www.shopsmart.com***) can steer you through online retailers; also look out also for sites belonging to the Which? Web Trader scheme, identified by a circular logo, and visit the Which? site (***www.which.net***) to check the company really has earned its spurs.

Finally, don't forget to see how much is charged for delivery; usually it's free, or at least under a tenner an item, but if the price rises with weight then tread carefully – some hi-fi amps can weigh quite a bit!

Occasionally, your shiny new equipment might have come direct from Europe – typically from Germany. There's no problem with that. With all the well-known brands you're covered by a pan-European warranty so if something goes horribly wrong, you're covered. Plus, most online suppliers offer money-back guarantees and warranty packages.

Stick to these basic rules and you really can't go wrong. As our examples prove, there are some exceptional deals to be had by buying audiovisual gear online.

Interested? Of course you are...

Buying kit online is far safer than some would have you believe

AMPS AND MINIDISC PLAYERS

SONY MDS-JB930 LIST PRICE: £300
Sony's MiniDisc recorder is beautifully made, easy to use and superlative to listen to.
www.unbeatable.co.uk £224
■ **SAVE £76!**

NAD C320 LIST PRICE: £200
This NAD amp might look fairly naff but it sounds divine. Punchy and built to rock.
www.empiredirect.co.uk £165
■ **SAVE £35!**

YAMAHA AX-392 LIST PRICE: £170
Powerful, solidly made and good-sounding amp. There's also a remote for couch potatoes.
www.empiredirect.co.uk £141 ■ **SAVE £29!**

Ammirati Puris Lintas

For further information or a dealer list, call 08 00/21 53 15 or visit www.vdodayton.com

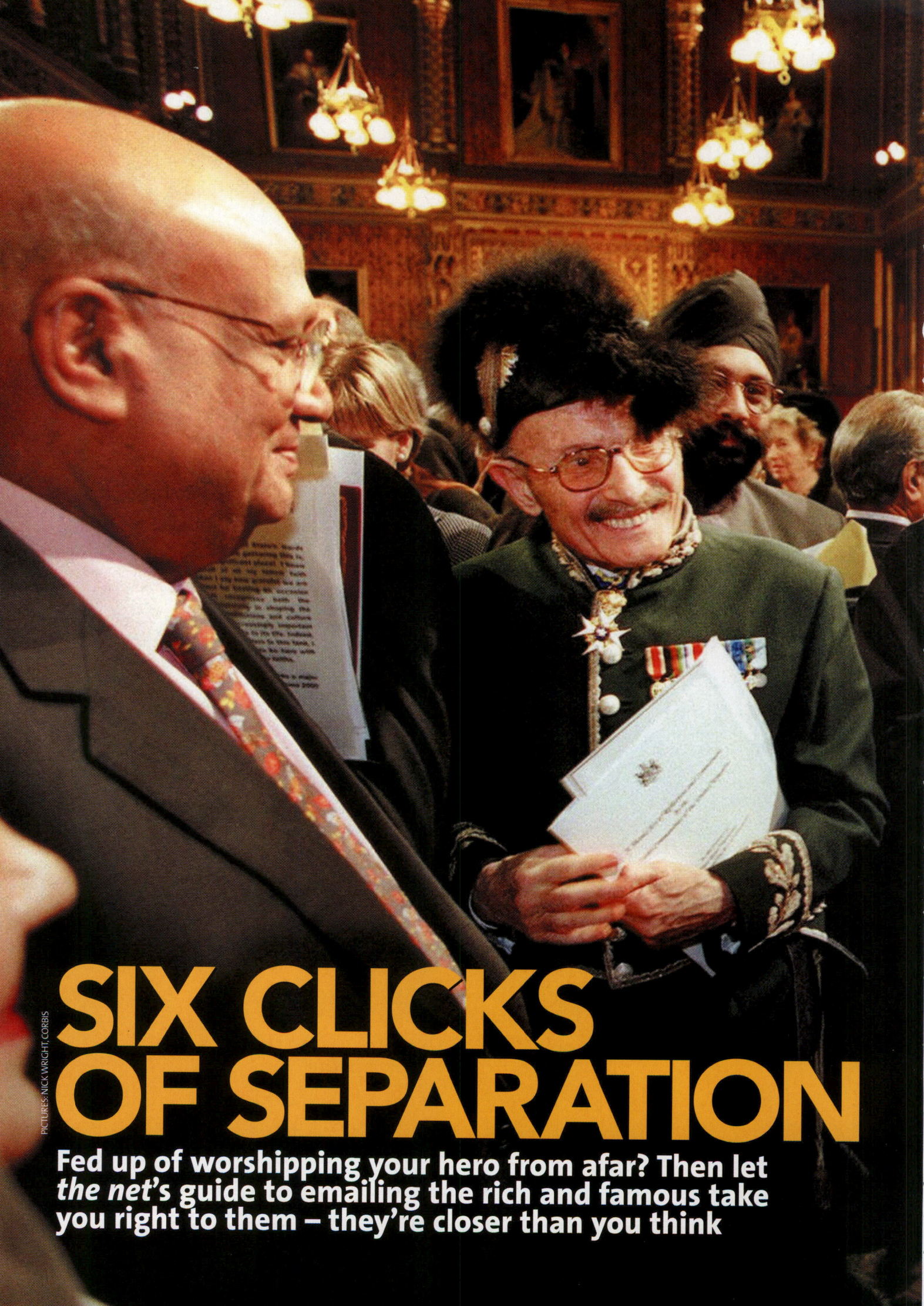
What sounds even better than a Cobra in a long tunnel? A VDO Dayton Audio System.

VDO Dayton Audio Systems. Don't compromise on high quality sound. Adapt it to the individual acoustics of your car with the integrated Auto Equalizer function. That's the VDO Dayton sound experience. Not just in long tunnels.

Car Multimedia Systems.

VDO dayton

VDO Dayton. The Car Brand.



SIX CLICKS OF SEPARATION

Fed up of worshipping your hero from afar? Then let *the net*'s guide to emailing the rich and famous take you right to them – they're closer than you think

PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, CORBIS

Find what you want on the Web
thenet
What Website?
1000s of sites reviewed
APRIL 2000 £2.50
WIRED WINE
I'm getting old boots and gooseberries'
IT'S 'TOON TIME!
Six Internet animators go head-to-head
Vic & Bob
for the first time
DICTS!

What's in your email inbox? Memos about work, still unopened weeks after they were sent? Pitiful jokes from bored colleagues? Reminders to do the shopping before you get home?

Now imagine if, instead of tedious gags and pointless junk mail, you could log on one morning to find a message from your favourite celebrity: Noel Gallagher swapping guitar tips, perhaps, or Courteney Cox explaining the plot of *Scream 3*...

It sounds far-fetched – but it isn't. With every other American now online, and a growing number of Brits too, it's inevitable that stars use email to keep in touch with agents, record companies and friends.

Dozens of sites have sprung up, particularly in the past year, offering celebrity addresses, not only for pop stars and actors but for politicians, authors and artists, too. Some are hopelessly out of date (overburdened celebs will simply change address when faced with a deluge of tat), while others simply copy bigger sites' content, but some boast real success stories.

'I think people find it fascinating that it's so easy to contact their hero or favourite movie star without all the waiting and fuss involved in regular mail. I have people continually searching for addresses,' says Martyn Barry, who runs one such site at ***hometown.aol.com/mbarry1417***. He believes many stars' publicists actively give out email addresses to encourage interaction and that many will respond to the right sort of enquiry. Persistence, he says, is the key – though knowing when to give up is an equally important attribute when star-hunting.

Imagine logging on and swapping guitar tips with Noel – it's not as far-fetched as it sounds

Celebrity email sites work in one of two ways. The majority source addresses from publicists, US magazines or from Web-driven rumours, then compile searchable lists for fans. Establishing the veracity of such listings is difficult – some may be fellow fans masquerading as a star for a laugh, as disappointed Meg Ryan fans discovered when they sent their messages to a Hotmail account she supposedly owned, while others may disappear quickly. The more effective method for contacting the famous is that favoured by ***celebrityemail.com***, the biggest and best such site. Rather than giving out specific addresses, they forward your messages to the star of your choice (sending it by ordinary post if they don't have an email listed). If there's a reply, it goes straight to your inbox.

Celebrityemail's most popular requests are for big-name entertainers – Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, Britney Spears, Shania Twain, Gillian Anderson and Will Smith appear to be the current favourites – but

WORDS: ROB JEFFREY. PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, ALL ACTION, CAMERA PRESS, CORBIS, EMPICS, MOVIESTORE, PA, RETNA

ADDRESSES OF THE STARS

Who you gonna call if you want to...

FORM YOUR OWN BOY BAND?
Try asking Boyzone superstar Ronan Keating at ***ronan@hg4.com***

DISCUSS THAT NEW VERSION OF AMERICAN PIE?
Tell Madonna what you think at ***madonna@wbr.com***

FIND A NEW FRIEND?
Could the Courteney Cox listed at ***cox@aol.com*** be her? Find out for yourself. Alternatively, email the show direct at ***friends@nbc.com***

COMPLAIN ABOUT SOME SOFTWARE?
Use the most over-exposed address of the lot (***billg@microsoft.com***)

CHAT TO BILL AND HILARY?
You'll need ***president@whitehouse.gov*** and ***first.lady@whitehouse.gov***

SLAY SOME VAMPIRES?
Have a word with Sarah Michelle Gellar: ***sarahmgz@aol.com***

CHAT WITH A FUN LOVIN' CRIMINAL?
Email Huey at ***huey@saintly.com***

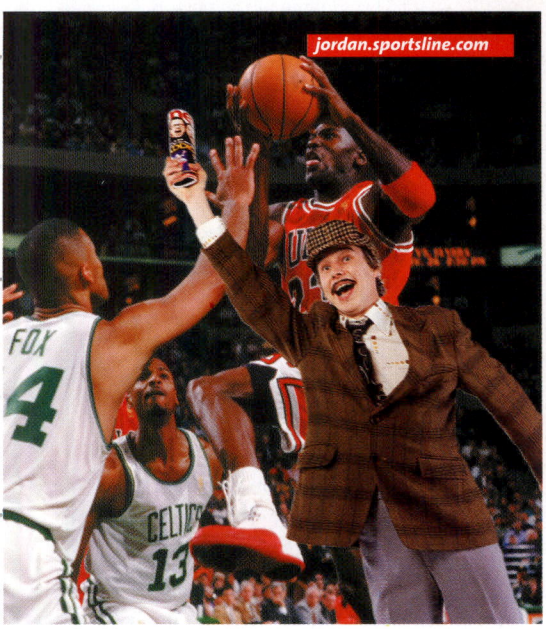
SWAP SOME LICKS?
Chat to Queen axemaster Brian May (***brianmay@queen-fip.com***)

WALLOW IN MISERABLISM?
You'll need tortured Cure frontman Robert Smith (***robert@thecure.com***)

SEE ONE I MADE EARLIER?
Chat to the *Blue Peter* team at ***bluepeter@bbc.co.uk***

there are more eclectic choices too, among them Prince William and Monica Lewinsky. Most users have simple requests, such as autographs or a quick reply just to prove someone's out there; occasionally, however, there are odder messages. One recent emailer told the eventual heir to the throne 'I would love to make new friends, especially from Royal families,' before inviting him for tea. Meanwhile a 39-year-old Oprah Winfrey fan wanted the TV star to 'sort my life out.'

The bigger the star, of course, the smaller the chances of getting a response. The likes of Leonardo and Britney are unlikely to take time out from their jet-setting, money-spinning schedules to personally respond to hundreds of messages, though authors, cartoonists and minor TV celebrities might have slightly more time on their hands. And there are ways to maximise your chances – keep your letter clean and brief, and avoid excessive platitudes. Oh, and just make sure that you have an actual reason for emailing in the first place, beyond sycophancy or lunacy.



'I would love to make new friends, especially from Royal families'

'I email Leonardo DiCaprio a lot,' claims 'Ripo', Webmaster of celebrity site ***members.aol.com/ripokicks/index8.html***. 'I don't tell him how great I think he is, but instead I talk to him about more casual subjects such as how the Lakers are playing. I've learned from experience that the way to get a reply is to send the celebrity a letter they would not expect to receive. You should definitely be as informal as possible.'

You can make your query even more appealing by finding the celebrity's official home page – most half-decent search engines will take you straight there – while the Ultimate Band List (***www.ubl.com***) and Internet Movie Database (***www.imdb.com***) are useful for musicians and actors respectively.

Official sites – such as ***www.rickymartin.com*** or ***www.emmanuelpetit.com*** – often feature feedback forms or email addresses. These may initially be answered by an assistant, but the chances of a reply in the long run are greater than an unsolicited message sent to a home address. Television networks (like ***www.bbc.co.uk***) and record companies are useful hunting grounds, too. Many official sites also hold chats with stars (thus allowing you to get your query answered, even if your aching desire to have Harrison Ford's children is shared with thousands of others). Yahoo! (***chat.yahoo.com***) and Yack (***www.yack.com***) keep a list of forthcoming Web events.

Your celebrity's newsgroup, which can be traced through ***www.deja.com***, might contain tips for getting in touch. AOL members can even try adding a celeb they know to be an AOL user to their Instant Messenger service, which tells you when your famous 'buddy' is online and where. The line between contacting and stalking seems somewhat blurred with such behaviour, however...

HARASS YOUR MP

But what if your quarry holds a position of power rather than idolatry? There are still ways of finding them. Every major political party now boasts a Web site, and all encourage feedback from voters. The excellent online parliamentary directory ***www.open.gov.uk*** will take you to any

ADDRESSES OF THE STARS

Who you gonna call if you want to...

VISIT THE PRIORY?
The Zoe Ball show, that is, not the clinic, at ***priory@ginger.com***

RANT AT COURTNEY LOVE?
Two email addresses are listed for the Hole loon – ***plasticat@aol.com*** and ***lilacsoo@aol.com***

FIND OUT WHAT I REALLY, REALLY WANT?
Fire off a missive to ***info@spicegirls.com***

MASTER THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK?
Ask magic superstars Penn & Teller (***mofo666@sincity.com***)

PRACTISE YOUR RIGHT HOOK?
Talk to Evander Holyfield at ***evander@evanderholyfield.com***

DISCUSS ACTING TECHNIQUE?
Chat to Samuel L Jackson (***winterofsam@aol.com***), Uma Thurman (***thurls@aol.com***) or – speculative, this one – Leonardo DiCaprio (***agoodactor@aol.com***)

SEND SOMETHING ABUSIVE?
Try US shock jock Howard Stern at ***stern@urshan.com***

Government department or individual MP (though not all have email addresses yet).

Sadly, Tony Blair has closed his inbox due to high demand, but the official Downing Street site at ***www.number-10.gov.uk*** is still open and the 'Speakers' Corner' message board, which Government minions promise to read, is as popular as ever. Don't expect a particularly informed level of debate, though – one posting read: 'How come there's homeless people when there's so much land out there? There is, really, loads of it. Went on a plane to Scotland once and you could see loads of it out the window.' Interestingly, Bill Clinton can still be emailed at ***president@whitehouse.gov*** (although applications for internship, presumably, are dealt with elsewhere).

Business is no less immune to the e-revolution: every company worth its salt has a Net presence, which can be found either through a search engine like ***scoot.co.uk*** or a business-specific directory like ***inbusiness.co.uk*** or ***britishcompanies.co.uk***. Newsgroups are full of tales of plucky consumers emailing company chairmen direct to air their grievances, but in truth such addresses are hard to come by. Try the obvious, though: if you know the domain name and the name of the person you're after, a variety of combinations (JohnSmith, John.Smith, JSmith or JohnS, for example) might just prove successful.

Sadly, Tony Blair has now closed his inbox due to the high demand

'I MADE THIS' How David Greenfield got Dannii online

David Greenfield started his own celebrity site (***www.dannii.com***) dedicated to Dannii Minogue three years ago; today, the 25-year-old Web developer from Solihull is firm friends with the Aussie singing midget and runs his site with her help. Minogue Jr oversees content and answers readers' questions – so how do you get a star in your inbox?

Dannii: friendlier than she looks

When did Dannii get involved in the site?
After I'd run it for about a year, I got a call from Dannii's manager at the time. I went up to London and met with Dannii and it went on from there. Dannii was just getting into the Net at the time – she had an email account before I knew her. Now she adores the Net, even though she finds the slow access very annoying.

Does she help run it?
Dannii and I now operate the site together, which is ideal as there's no management or music company to worry about. What's on the site comes directly from Dannii, which makes it quite unique. When users submit a question, it comes to me. I check it to make sure it's reasonable and send it on to Dannii, who sends back a reply.

There must be things you can't let her see...
Unfortunately, the Net is a breeding ground for all sorts of people with all sorts of questions. About 40 per cent of the questions I receive are unsuitable. I'm sure you can imagine the questions you get, but I also receive a lot of pictures that people forward of themselves or parts of themselves which they think Dannii will get to see. Of course, they don't get forwarded to her. It's not just men; it's women, too.

How can other fans get a celebrity involved in their site?
Find their agent's details, then write to them. Don't initially ask for anything other then priority details of the star's latest tour or TV appearances. A members-only area is the most important thing – to say you have the ability to direct-mail thousands of people who are, by definition, a fan of the celebrity is very powerful. From there hopefully come interviews with the star, and with any luck, you become friends.

TRACKING JOE PUBLIC

It's not just celebrities, of course, who can be tracked down online. Ordinary members of the public leave what experts like to call 'electronic footprints' wherever they tread. If you know someone's name and rough location, there are numerous sources for tracing their email address.

Most locator services rely on registration; the user either has to specifically request a listing, or they have to have register with a site which has passed their details on. Bigfoot (***uk.bigfoot.com***) is probably the best-known and most reliable of them; by simply

PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, ALL ACTION, CORBIS

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www.whatcar.co.uk

'IS THERE ANYBODY THERE?' Using a Web psychic

PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, REX FEATURES

You can't take your email address with you when you go – but being dead is still no barrier to being contacted via the Internet. Hundreds of Web psychics are currently plying their trade online, with most offering to talk to the deceased via email.

While many such clairvoyants will only contact friends and family members of the bereaved, a significant number will also pass on messages from favourite dead celebs. They include the most celebrated Web psychic, James Van Praagh (***www.vanpraagh.com***), who explains he is 'clairsentient and also clairvoyant. The first is feeling, the second is seeing, very much like Whoopi Goldberg in *Ghost*.' Van Praagh had his first paranormal experience at eight years old, when the 'hand of God' suddenly appeared through his bedroom ceiling.

And you needn't think it's just neurotic Americans who turn to clairvoyance: there are a growing number of British mediums online, among them Bernard Ilsley (***www.ilsley.com***), Laurence Harry aka Hawk (***www.laurence-harry.com***) and Zak Martin (***www.zak martin.com***), whose site includes a surprisingly engrossing ESP test, which helps you discover if you possess psychic powers. None of it comes cheap, however – most initial consultations cost between £20 and £70. To find a Web clairvoyant, or learn more, see ***www.paraseek.com***

typing in a name, it'll produce a variety of addresses from major ISPs. The Free Email Address Directory (***www.email addresses.com***) lists over 700 sites that do something similar. If all else fails, Peoplefind (***www.peoplefind.com***) promise to track someone down the next day – for a fee.

If you don't want to be found, there are sites which will wipe your e-prints

Just as footprints disappear, however, so e-prints can be wiped away by the feather duster of the Web. If you don't want to be found, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (***www.eff.org***) provides a checklist, the main principles of which are self-explanatory: don't post to newsgroups or mailing lists from your personal address, don't hand out email details to people you've only just come across, turn on your browser's cookie warning so you know when your movements are being monitored and never reply to junk mail. Finally, Epic (***www.epic.org/privacy/tools.html***) provides a list of software tools which can 'shred' emails after they're sent, encrypt messages and 'cut' cookies. In cyberspace, it seems, you can run but you can't hide...

SURFING STARS

Sites to aid you in your quest...

- ***www.celebrityemail.com*** The biggest and best list of celebrities on the Web.
- ***www.barringtons.com/EmailDir*** Hundreds of stars listed by category.
- ***web2.airmail.net/bobb*** Large list of (mostly) US celebrities.
- ***hometown.aol.com/MBarry1417*** Large database of celebs; very easy-to-use.
- ***Members.aol.com/Ripokicks/index8.html*** Pulls together other sites' lists.
- ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/1835*** Provides a sample of the type of email you might just want to send.
- ***www.yack.com*** Find out when your favourite celeb's chatting next.
- ***www.open.gov.uk*** Harass your MP with this Governmental search engine.
- ***www.scoot.co.uk*** Track down any UK company – then go straight to the top.
- ***uk.bigfoot.com*** Find a friend. If they want to be found, that is.

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Retail therapy

Something for everyone this month, including a present for the smallest room in the house

Pool balls £47

Couldn't you just blast this lot to kingdom come? Kit yourself out with a new set of balls from the Newitts site, which offers next-day delivery on just about every bit of sporting kit imaginable. The £8.23 delivery charge took the shine off, however. ***www.newitts.com***

Shaving gear from £16.50

Become Mr Smooth with the help of this lot. P&p starts at 60p; allow five to ten days for delivery. ***www.the englishshavingcompany.co.uk***

Safe surfing sign £12

Cyberspace can have its sharks too, so whether your surfing is sea- or screen-based, this piece of Aussie signage will remind you of the hazards. Delivery costs £4; allow five working days. ***www.iwantoneofthose.com***

Easter egg £9.95

Not any old Easter egg but a tasty, handmade 'Swiss- designed chick' from Betty's of Harrogate. The p&p isn't going cheap at £5.90 (allow 48 hours), so order plenty. ***www.bettysbypost.com***

THE NET'S TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Keep to our simple guidelines, and there's no reason why online shopping should end in a puddle of tears

■ **CHECK THE SITE IS SECURE** A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

■ **SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES** As with any shopping, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of.

■ **CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES** Companies should tell you the delivery charge if there is one on their site. If you live in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find that free delivery does not apply.

■ **NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL** If a site asks for card details by email, don't oblige. It's far, far easier for emails to be intercepted.

■ **PRINT THE CONTRACT** This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number and other details. Don't forget: if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the High Street.

■ **IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY** Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer and very often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the online store's interest to sort any problems out quickly.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WRIGHT

Micro Skate scooter £119.95

Inline skating – pah, yesterday's transport! Get yourself a nifty foldable Micro Skate scooter and really wreak havoc on the pavements. Delivery is free and takes two to four days. ***www.hotbox.co.uk***

Seiko S-Wave £125

Face For Watches specialises in hard-to-find classics – and this S-Wave gets five stars for rarity. Delivery costs £4.95 and your timepiece will be with you in 48 hours. ***faceforwatches.com***

Fart machine $11.95

Delivery costs $7.80 and takes two to three weeks, but this hi-tech alternative to the whoopee cushion is worth the wait. ***www.funideas.com***

Jelly bean loo seat £85.10

Replace your bog-standard (sorry) pine model with a loo seat stuffed with GM-free jelly beans. Delivery is free and goods usually arrive within four days. ***www.pupsnuts.com***

Glowing Virgin Mary £4.95

Apparently, praying to a glowing statue is more likely to result in success. Don't bet on it, but she will glow for you like a beacon. Delivery: £4; allow five days. Lovely. ***www.kitsch.co.uk***

Ted Baker shirt £64.99

Since Ted Baker went online, you don't even have to leave your desktop to make sure you've got a clean shirt for the next morning (as long as you allow up to three days for delivery). Ted's site features his entire range and delivery is based on weight – our shirt came out at £5.88 p&p. ***www.tedbaker.co.uk***

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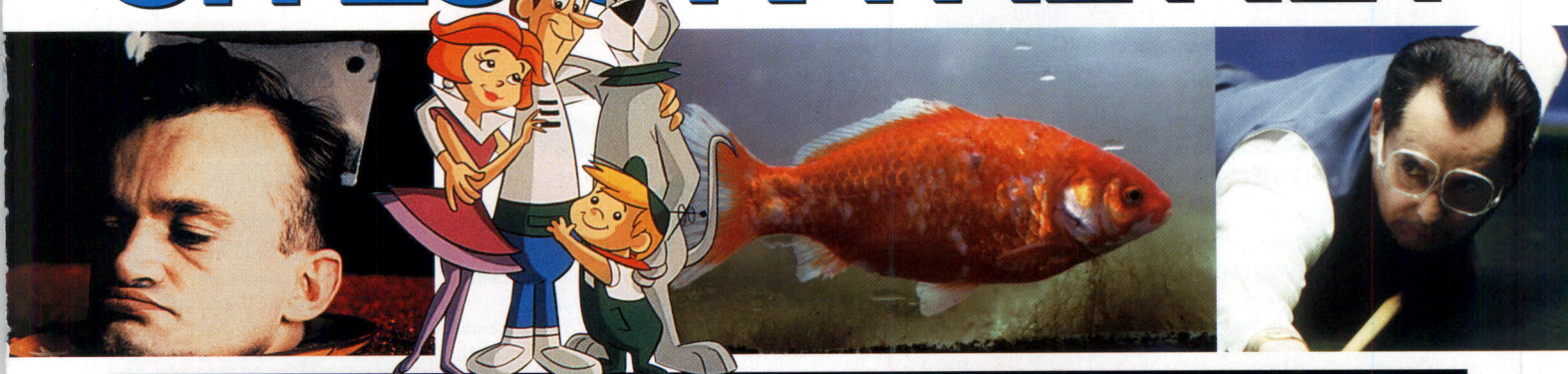
what website?

May 2000

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE BIGGEST, BESTEST SITES ON THE NET



FRYING TONIGHT!

SHOW ME THE SITES...

What Website?

MAY

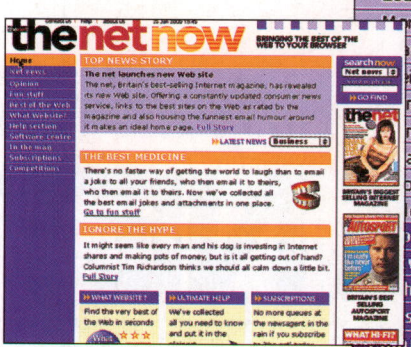
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

It might be a glorious, sunny, early summer's day outside, but once you've had a look at the Website wonders we've discovered for you this month you won't care if the entire *Baywatch* cast are cavorting beneath your window. Check out all the goodies in What Website...

www.whatwebsite.com

EVERY LINK ON ONE GREAT SITE!

Is there no end to our kindness and concern for your health and wellbeing? Apparently not: to cut down on the time you spend using the keyboard just type in one address – ***www.whatwebsite.com*** – to link up with the sites...



THE FREE SOFTWARE STARTER PACK

THE ULTIMATE HELP BUTTON ***www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton*** Our guide has all the essential free software reviewed and rated with links

PLAYING MULTIMEDIA BROWSER WATCH
browserwatch.internet.com/plug-in.html
A comprehensive list of browser plug-ins.

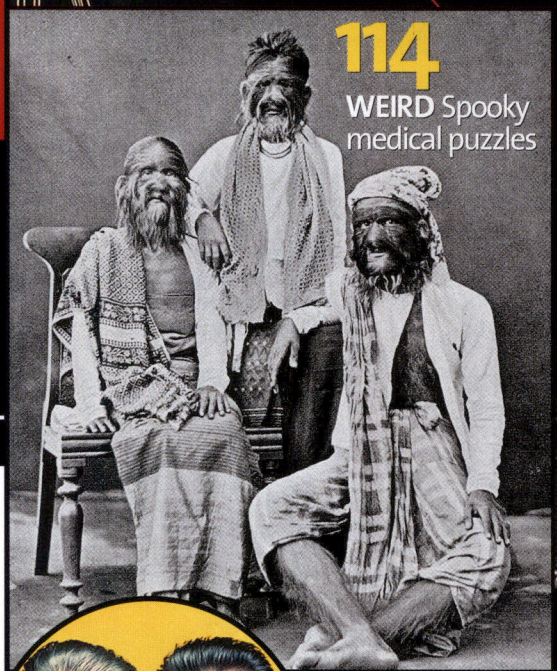
REALPLAYER G2
www.real.com
Cross-platform free software for streaming movie (RealVideo) and audio (RealAudio) files across the Internet.

QUICKTIME 4.0
www.apple.com/quicktime
Version 4 of this multimedia software will play just about anything, including MP3 files.

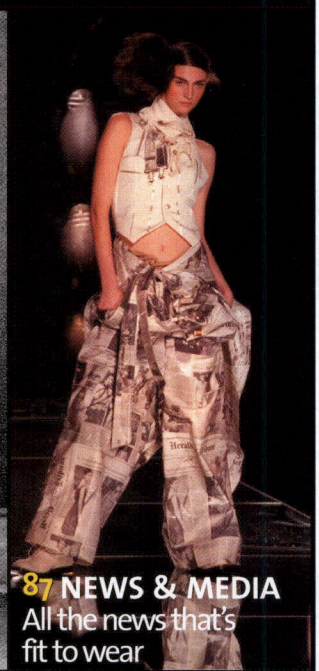
MICROSOFT MEDIAPLAYER
www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer
Plays streaming audio and video files saved in the MediaPlayer format.

SHOCKWAVE & FLASH
www.shockwave.com
A must-have if you want to enjoy sound, great animation effects and even natty games on Web sites.

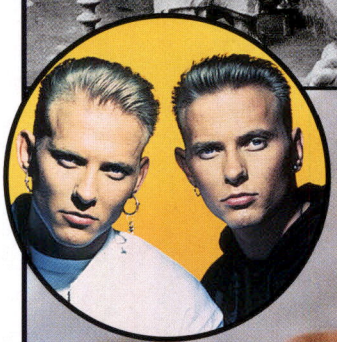
101 STYLE & FASHION If the shoe fits...

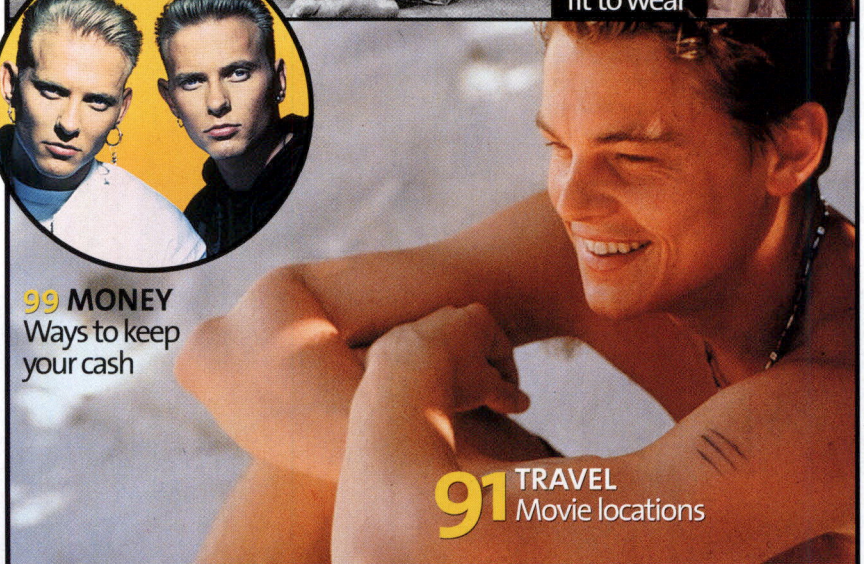


114 WEIRD Spooky medical puzzles



87 NEWS & MEDIA All the news that's fit to wear





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91 TRAVEL Movie locations

76 MUSIC Punk's not dead!

PICTURES: REX, RETNA, SCOPE, MOVIESTORE COLLECTION, FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY

THE LISTINGS

MAY 2000

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NEED TO KNOW 116
The ultimate in siteseeing

To the galaxy and beyond

MOVIE RELEASES Marshall Julius whips this month's new films into a cinematic frenzy

Cradle Will Rock: long

American Psycho

Christian Bale, Willem Dafoe, Jared Leto ★★★★

A pitch-black satire which accurately and justifiably savages the '80s, this long-awaited feature adaptation of Brett Easton Ellis's traumatic novel is essential viewing. Christian Bale dominates the screen as ultimate yuppie consumer Patrick Bateman, an image-obsessed psychopath who divides his time between making and spending money, indulging his extreme sexual appetites and perpetrating horrendous acts of violence. Hilarious and horrifying – often at the same time – *American Psycho* offers a wealth of uncomfortable entertainment.

www.americanpsycho.com

Get Patrick Bateman to send you an email and chat with fellow psychos on this classy, amusing site.

Asterix & Obelix Take On Caesar

Christian Clavier, Gerard Depardieu, Roberto Benigni ★

'Quick! The doughnuts are over there!'

Fans of Goscinny and Uderzo's plucky little Gauls are likely to feel massively let down by this charmless live-action adaptation, a bland bit of dubbed Eurotrash bereft of plot, jokes and imagination. Some nightmarish images and the cast's constant swearing make yje film an inappropriate choice for kids, while adults will simply be bored to distraction as Asterix (Clavier) and fat pal Obelix (the chunky Depardieu being an obvious choice) take on the might of Rome – with all-too predictable results.

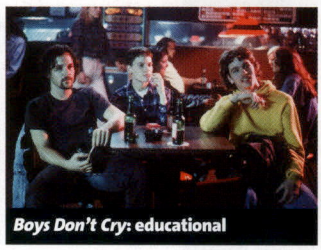
www.asterix.tm.fr/lefilm/intro-tx.htm

Postcards, icons, clips, pics and games galore. Shame it's all in French.

Boys Don't Cry

Hilary Swank, Chloë Sevigny, Peter Sarsgaard ★★

A long, slow, miserable slog of a drama better suited to a Jerry Springer special, *Boys Don't Cry* tells the harrowing true story of a sexually confused young girl who was murdered by some poor white trash after masquerading as a bloke. Bleak and depressing, unpleasant and upsetting, this is clearly not meant to entertain, but what exactly is it trying to teach us? That small-town Americans are ignorant, hate-filled junkies? Sure, it's impressively made and brilliantly well played, but give us a break.



Boys Don't Cry: educational

www.foxsearchlight.com/boysdontcry *An arty site which thinks it's clever but doesn't have all that much to offer.*

Cradle Will Rock

Hank Azaria, John Cusack, Bill Murray ★★

Back in '30s America, when theatre had the power to influence people, Orson Welles and his fellow creatives at the Federal Theater Project struggled to put on a show which proved way too controversial for their own good. Tim Robbins stepped behind the cameras to direct this ambitious ensemble drama which, though academically interesting, impressively cast and well designed, has far too little heart and seems to drag on forever.

www.studio.go.com/movies/cradlewillrock/index_flash.html

Nothing much to see or do on this dull and shallow site.

Ghost Dog

Forest Whitaker, John Tormey, Cliff Gorman ★★★★

A typically imaginative, off-beat and stylish thriller from writer/director Jim Jarmusch (whose previous efforts include *Night on Earth* and

Galaxy Quest

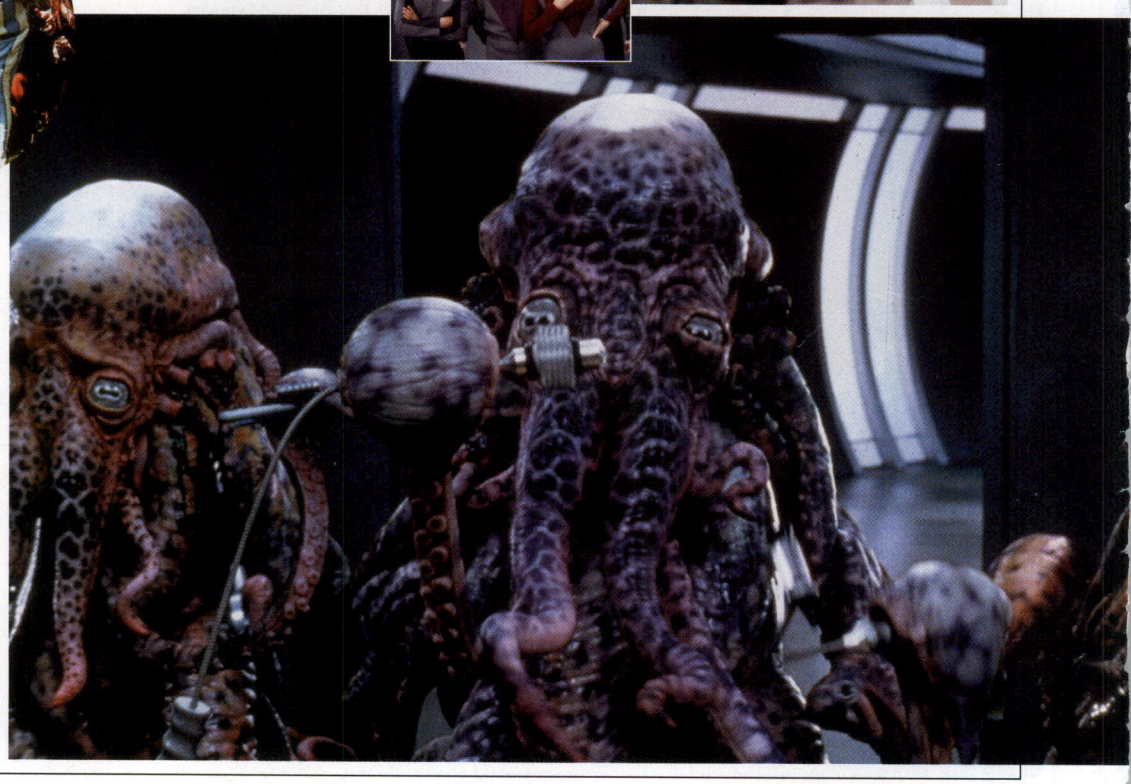
Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver, Alan Rickman ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Mistaken for astronaut heroes by an impressionable alien race, the stars of cult sci-fi show *Galaxy Quest* are taken to the final frontier. Forced to play their roles for real, battling egos and aliens as they bluff their way along, our heroes learn what it takes to make it in outer space. An often hilarious *Star Trek* spoof with great effects and performances, this isn't just for Trekkies.

www.galaxyquest.com/galaxyquest

More fun than the official site, this fan-produced effort has lots to see.



PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION, KOBAL COLLECTION, IMAGENET

Mystery Train), *Ghost Dog* features Forest Whitaker as a pigeon-loving, Samurai-obsessed hitman who lives in a rooftop shack and does the odd job for a local mobster who once saved his life. Events turn sour when the goodfellas double-cross our introspective anti-hero, and pretty soon the blood is flowing like wine. Literate and wryly funny.

www.wayofthesamurai.com *Learn the art of war- and movie-making via this stylish presentation.*

Amish: not good as astronauts

CLASSIC FILM

DARK STAR

Brian Narelle, Dre Pahich, Cal Kuniholm (1974) Thanks to Kubrick's *2001*, most pre-*Star Wars* sci-fi was about as much fun as sitting exams. Not *Dark Star* though, the cheap and cheerful debut of director John Carpenter. A bunch of weirdos one million light years from Earth roam the galaxy in a deteriorating spaceship looking for unstable planets to blow up. Bored after two decades in space, they're saddled with philosophising bombs, a mischievous alien mascot, and one another. Ingenious and absurd.

www.mediacom.it/~sna/dsmovie.html *Pics, links and behind-the-scenes info on this fan site. You can even learn how to build your own paper Dark Star model.*

Kevin and Perry Go Large

Harry Enfield, Kathy Burke, Rhys Ifans ★★★

Slaves to their hormones, Kevin and Perry hit the big screen with the sole intention of losing their virginity. Cue teenage awkwardness, endless erection gags and an incident-packed trip to Ibiza alongside Kevin's embarrassing parents. As with most feature adaptations of TV hits, the laughs don't come quite as thick and fast as you'd hope, but it's funny enough to get by, with plenty of wish-fulfilment action for students.

www.kevinandperry.co.uk *A plain site, short on multimedia and ideas.*

Mission To Mars

Tim Robbins, Gary Sinise, Frances McDormand ★★★

Brian DePalma is a director whose good ideas are too often ruined by his bad ones, so approach this space epic with caution. Astronauts Robbins and Sinise head for the Red Planet on a perilous rescue mission which holds all sorts of *2001*-style surprises. Advance word from the States is cautious, to say the least.

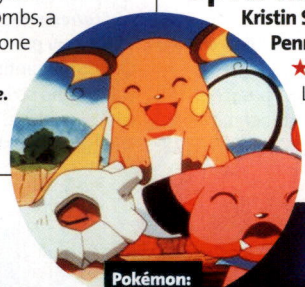
www.studio.go.com/m2m/index.html *Do you have what it takes to be a Mars Mission Commander? Try the flight simulator on this great-looking site and find out...*

Pokémon – The First Movie

Veronica Taylor, Rachael Lillis, Eric Stuart ★★

Dividing parents from their cash, kids from their homework and the pre- from the post-pubescent, Pokémon is a global phenomenon. From stuffed toys to TV and beyond, the pocket monsters have conquered every market in their path; and though their debut feature is a horrible, unwatchable mess, as the evil Mewtwo and his army battle the cutesy Pokémon, the little ones are bound to lap it up.

www.pokemonthemovie.com *This busy site will keep kids quiet for hours.*



Pokémon: this is only the first...

Up At The Villa

Kristin Scott Thomas, Sean Penn, Anne Bancroft ★★★

Leisurely paced and handsomely mounted adaptation of a posh, and ever so slightly racy, Somerset Maugham story, with the ever icy Scott Thomas breaking hearts and mixing with the smart set in pre-WWII Florence. Combining sex, death, politics and polite society with a familiar cast and gorgeous scenery, director Philip Haas delivers an intriguing and often amusing romantic thriller.

lavender.fortunecity.com/westside/177/penn.html *A wealth of Penn-related information, with plenty of links and features.*

WHAT THE SITES ARE SAYING

	aint-it-cool-news.com	cinemachine.com	cinematter.com	eonline.com	film.com	salon.com
Boys Don't Cry	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍
Cradle Will Rock	👎	👎	👎	👍	👎	👎
Galaxy Quest	👎	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍
Pokémon: The Movie	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎

The shampoo company's Black Museum was a well-kept secret

THE ONES TO WATCH

VIDEO RELEASES Films to rent, buy or bin this month. Now with added DVD!

PUSHING TIN

John Cusack, Billy Bob Thornton

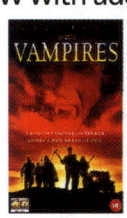
An edgy black comedy with some top stressful moments, this fun but flawed tale of rival air traffic controllers lets itself down with too many formula twists. Some laughs, but it leaves you wanting less.

www.foxmovies.com/pushingtin

EYES WIDE SHUT

Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman

Hugely stylised, even for Kubrick, this long, deep movie has Cruise, who plays a doctor, embarking on a journey of sexual discovery. Kidman, meanwhile, plays the wife who admits to sexual fantasies. Not exactly a bundle of fun, but interesting and quite rude. ***www.eyeswideshut.com***



VAMPIRES

James Woods, Thomas Ian Griffith

Sad evidence that *Dark Star* director John Carpenter has lost it. Vatican-sanctioned slayers battle the undead in Mexico. All special effects with zero scares – stupid and atmosphere-free with it.

www.spe.sony.com/movies/vampires

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

Heather Donahue, Michael Williams

A trio of American students get lost in the woods on the trail of the legendary Blair Witch. Though some were terrified, whining teens and shaky camerawork left others bored.

www.blairwitch.co.uk

SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE

Sarah Michelle Gellar, Sean Patrick Flanery

A self-consciously stylised romantic comedy with one foot in the past and the other in its mouth, *Simply Irresistible* proves to be anything but.

www.smgbuffy.u-net.com

BOWFINGER

Steve Martin, Eddie Murphy, Heather Graham

Martin, Murphy and director Frank Oz in a triple return to form. This hilarious comedy features Martin as a film producer determined to get his no-budget sci-fi epic onto the big screen. Look out also for Terence Stamp and Robert Downey Jr.

www.bowfinger.com

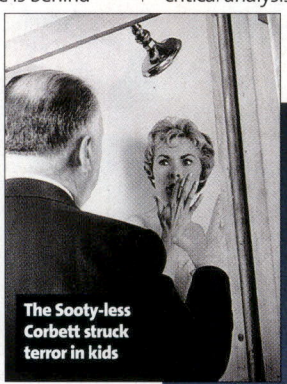
'Who made that load of rubbish!'

DIRECTORS Their efforts go largely un-noticed – but the world's best directors are celebrated on the Web

The Alan Smithee Tribute Page

www.ioc.net/~michaelc/smithee/smithee.htm ★★★★

Actor, director, writer, composer – the prolific Mr Smithee is behind some of the worst movies ever, from *Bloodsucking Pharaohs in Pittsburgh* to the straight-to-video *Raging Angels*. That's because he's the name directors take when they don't want to be linked to a film they've made... Find out more here.

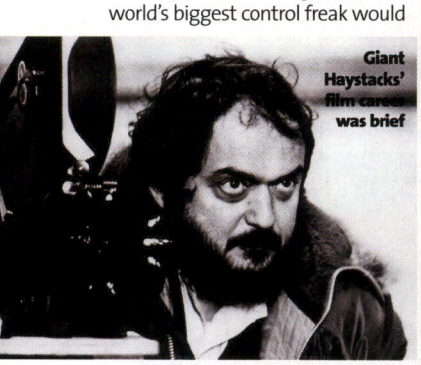


The Sooty-less Corbett struck terror in kids

Kubrick Multimedia Film Guide

www.indelibleinc.com/kubrick ★★★★

This minimalist site is a fine source of stills, trailers and soundbites from the late director's works, in addition to a good selection of Kubrick links, a messageboard, print references and poster art. It's a great place for fans to plunder, although the world's biggest control freak would hardly approve. But then again, he's dead.



Giant Haystacks' film career was brief

Luc Besson Fanpage

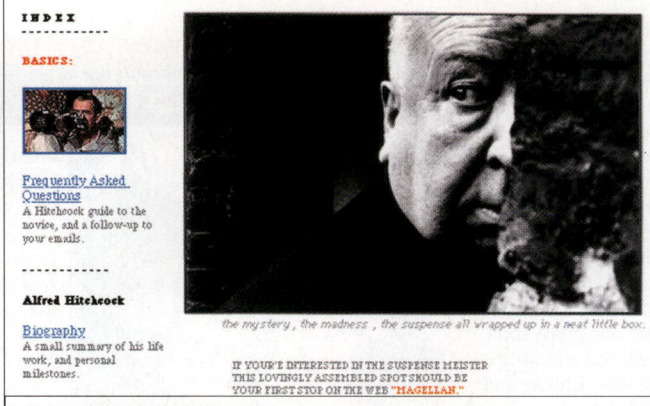
endor.freeservers.com/luc ★★

He might have gone off the rails with *The Fifth Element*, but Luc Besson's still one of the most stylish helmers around – so it's no surprise that the best-looking things on this fan site are the stills. And stills are it, apart from a desultory collection of essays. You can find good French-language Besson pages out there but the man behind the ultimate chick-with-a-gun movie, *Nikita*, deserves better.

The Reservoir

surf.to/reservoir ★★★★

This nicely presented shrine to Quentin Tarantino is long on stills, trailers and scripts, but short on critical analysis. That said, it's a good starting point for Tarantino wannabes – which means just



Alfred Hitchcock – The Master of Suspense

nextdch.mty.itesm.mx/~plopezg/Kaplan/Hitchcock.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Patricio López-Guzmán is a Mexican university student. He's also a Hitchcock fan, and his near-perfect site is the legacy the old shockmeister deserves. There's a filmography with cast and crew credits, a selection of essays, an FAQ section and a film-by-film listing of Hitch's cameos – all good stuff, but it's the care and attention with which the site's been put together that makes it stand out. Are you looking for a Web designer? Then get on the next plane to Monterrey.

'No bombing, no petting Mr Hitchcock'

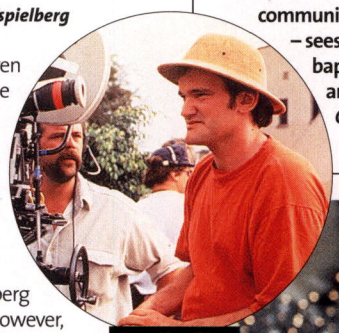
WORDS: MATTHEW BINGHAM; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE

about every British film-maker under the age of 45. There's also some information on his next project – a Western called *Forty Lashes*.

Scruffles' Spielberg Directory

www.scruffles.net/spielberg
★★★

Scruffles likes Steven Spielberg. A *lot*. The misfiring *Empire of the Sun* is 'amazing'. Prize turkey *1941* is 'very under-rated'. And believe it or not, this is the least sycophantic Spielberg site on the Web. However, if you can stomach the fan-boy fawning, the Directory is a comprehensive overview of the man's career, and is particularly strong on his many films as producer.



Quentin: silly name, silly hat

Tim Burton

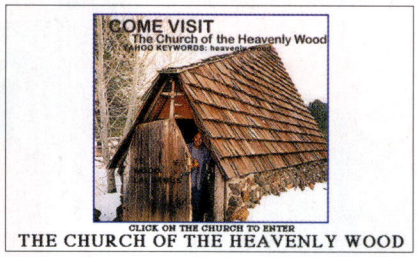
home.acadia.net/userpages/joel/timburton ★★★

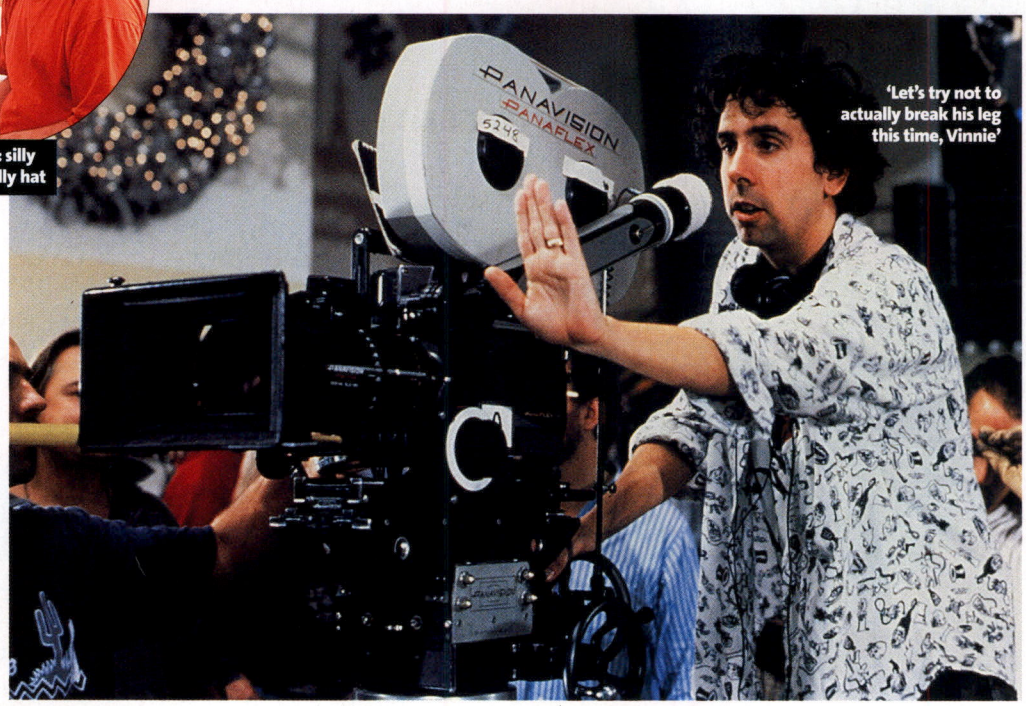
This homage to tousle-haired *Batman* director Tim Burton could do with an update – there's little on his most recent film, *Sleepy Hollow* – but for the remainder of his back catalogue it's unsurpassed. Appropriately designed in black-and-white, each movie is commented on by Burton himself. There's even a messageboard, so lonely goths can chat to each other from their gloomy bedrooms.

RELIGIOUS CONVICTION

THE CHURCH OF HEAVENLY WOOD

Possibly the worst director ever to expose celluloid to light, Edward D. Wood Jnr has inspired a Net religion: the Cult of Woodism. In the work of the cross-dressing, angora-loving helmer, the Rev Steve Galindo – self-appointed patron saint of community theatre actors, bisexuals and video store clerks – sees a plea for religious and sexual tolerance. He can baptise via his site; there's a sainthood to be won; and you can buy Wood's 'teachings', such as *Glen or Glenda* and *Plan Nine From Outer Space*. See *www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/9565*





'Let's try not to actually break his leg this time, Vinnie'

best movies sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET LATEST NEWS AND RELEASE DATES?

www.popcorn.co.uk
British perspective on new releases.
aint-it-cool-news.com
Gives the inside track on new films.
www.filmunlimited.co.uk
Views and news from *The Guardian*.
uk.imdb.com
The bible of online film – use the search engine or you'll soon be lost.

DECIDE WHAT TO SEE?

www.salon.com/ent/movies
The most intelligent reviews online.
www.filmreview.co.uk
A review site to rival the Americans.
www.mrqe.com
Flamboyantly-titled Movie Review Query Engine with 17,000+ films.
www.movie-trailers.com
Trailers for all new films, plus archives.

FIND OFFICIAL FILM SITES?

www.foxmovies.com
Provides links to all 20th Century Fox movie releases.
www.movies.warnerbros.com
WB's new films and lost classics.
www.paramount.com
Films, TV, videos and more.

SEARCH FOR OBSCURE FILMS AND SCRIPTS?

Find your favourites at paramount.com

www.script-o-rama.com
Read rejected scripts for well-known films plus transcripts of obscure ones.
www.ohthehumanity.com
The worst movies of all time rated.
www.stinkers.com
Clips of the worst movies ever!
www.freemoviescripts.com
Scripts, plus plays and novels too.

FIND A CINEMA?

www.uci-cinemas.co.uk
Great search engine for film screenings.
www.odeon.co.uk
Book online, or peruse the latest information.
cinema.scoot.co.uk
From the people behind the directory.
www.cineworld.co.uk
UK film portal with a cinema finder.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.movies.kubrick
From *The Shining* to *Eyes Wide Shut*.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

alt.fan.actors
Discuss the art of film-making by sending an email marked 'subscribe film-theory' to ***Majordomo@lists.village.virginia.edu***

GET CHATTING?

buzzcom.com
Get the buzz on new films before they're out over here.

The Universe Of David Lynch

www.davidlynch.de ★★★

The acid test for the credibility of any David Lynch fan page: what does it say about his '80s clunker, *Dune*? The Universe passes with flying colours – it's a 'disaster'. Well, actually, it's a 'desaster', but that could be because it's an English-language version of a German site. It's a shame that so many of the links are to German sites, but there are more than enough visuals and comment to compensate for fans of the bouffant director.

'You Know, For Kids!'

x-stream.fortunecity.com/fleetst/71
★★★★

If you recognise that description of the Hula Hoop from *The Hudsucker Proxy*, you're a Coen brothers fan. And you'll enjoy this site. Like the boys themselves, it's cool, deadpan and artfully constructed, briefly but informatively running through their movies and favoured actors. There's also news on the Coens' work in progress, including an intriguing George Clooney vehicle, *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?*

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And we know what you really really don't want.
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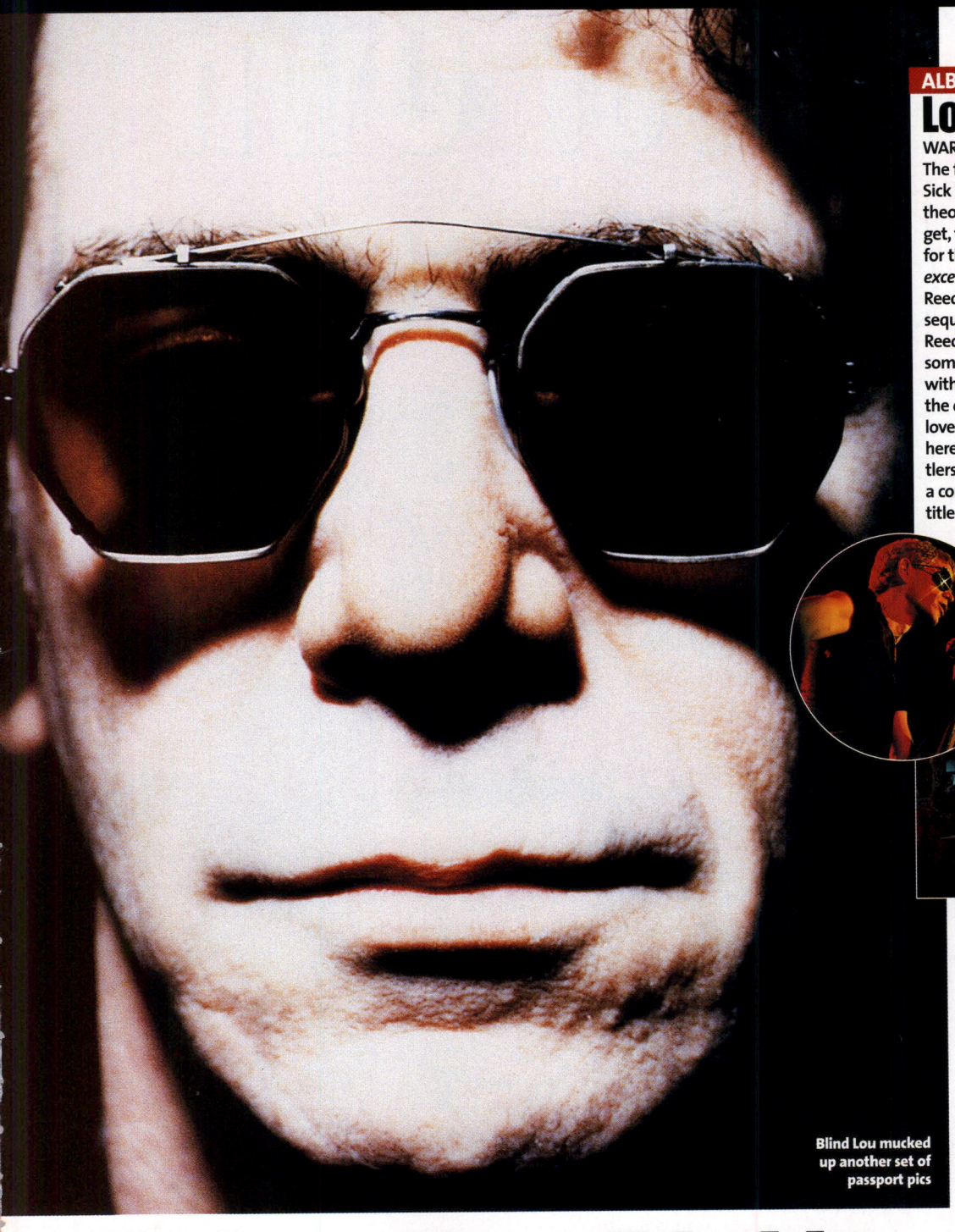
So that's it then. It's Madasafish for you. You get everything you want - with no downtime and no engaged tones. And you get a Madasafish email address. Sorted.

for FREE internet access call **0800 0273373** or visit

www.madasafish.com for details



Blind Lou mucked up another set of passport pics

Walk on the wild side

NEW RELEASES Lou Reed returns – and so, sadly, do The Mission. John Mullen sorts the wheat of the new sounds from the chaff in this month's round-up

Belle & Sebastian

Lazy Line Painter Jane **JEEPSTER**

★★★★★

With a new album expected to come out later this year, this cheapo set of three B&S EPs is a good way for the uninitiated to catch up. *Dog On Wheels*, *Lazy Line Painter Jane* and *3.. 6.. 9.. Seconds Of Light* all show that indie music can still hold its own against those scary kids with turntables. And surely no singer has sounded as plaintive as Stuart Murdoch since Nick Drake.

www.belleandsebastian.co.uk *Official site with excellent links to some of the loopier fan-pages.*

Broadcast

The Noises Made By People **WARP**

★★★★

Birmingham's Broadcast have got much more in common with futurist pioneers like Kraftwerk and Stereolab than with Ocean Colour Scene. As well as specialising in the kind of floaty ambient noises you used to hear on *The Clangers*, Broadcast can also wig out when occasion demands, in a way that brings to mind the Smash robots covering *Smoke On The Water*.

www.warprecords.co.uk *Official site for the label that brought you Aphex Twin and Squarepusher.*

B&S: strum might say

Candidate

Taking On The Enemy's Sound

SNOWSTORM ★★★

Featuring on every music scribe's 'brightest hope' list, London's Candidate have an undeniable knack for writing arresting tunes (see the simian-themed *Son Of Kong*), but their fusion of lo-fi production and folk atmospherics is a tad underwhelming. Still, at least they're no Ultrasound, and *Caboose* hints at a love of early Gary Numan that could lead to some interesting results in the future.

www.candidatesite.co.uk *Surprisingly good site for a new band, which also includes their daft drawings.*

Nick Cave

The Secret Life Of The Love Song

KING MOB ★★★★

Spoken word with a difference. Featuring five of his best tunes (including a cheery rendition of the classic *People Ain't No Good*), Cave explains his own warped take on the love song, including an hysterical interpretation of Kylie's *Better The*

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Lou Reed *Ecstasy*

WARNERS ★★★★★

The funniest scene in *Trainspotting* has Sick Boy explaining his all-encompassing theory on life – basically, the older you get, the more rubbish you become. And for the junkie Scot, the example *par excellence* of this phenomenon is Lou Reed's solo career. Well, a *Trainspotting* sequel would have to take into account Reed's latest album, which contains some of his best material since his days with the Velvet Underground. Back on the dismal New York city streets Reed loves so much, there's a genuine beauty here among the tales of small-town hustlers and wise-guys. There could even be a couple of hits, especially the gorgeous title track. Sorry, Sick Boy.

www.loureed.org *Obviously Lou cares as much about the Net as David Bowie. This official site features the latest news, a timeline and a huge discography.*

PICTURES: RETNA

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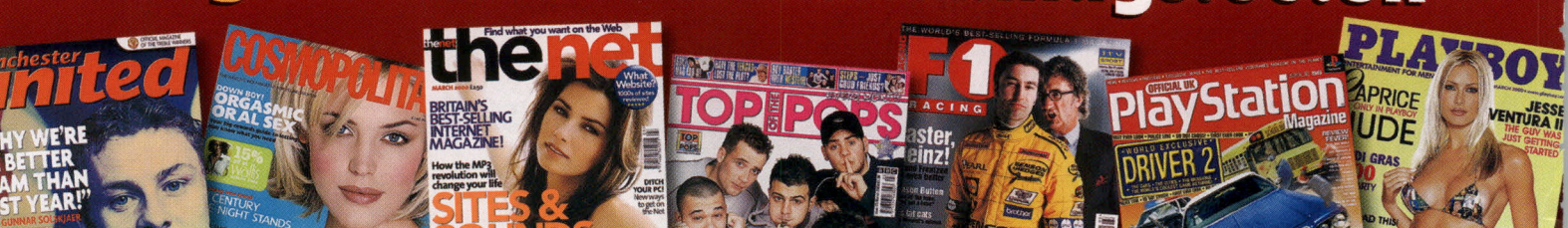


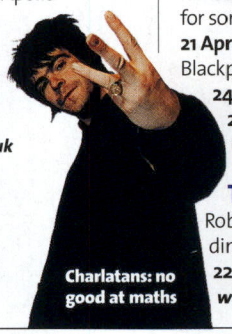
GIG AND TOUR GUIDE

APRIL 'Shepton Mallet – are you ready to rock?'

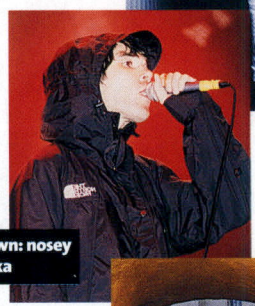
IAN BROWN
Improbably rejuvenated monkey-man – just don't go expecting him to sing *She Bangs The Drums*.
26 Apr London Hammersmith Palais **27 Apr** Blackpool Empress Ballroom
www.ianbrown.co.uk

GOMEZ
Loveable five-piece who specialise in urban camp-fire songs.
12 Apr Manchester Apollo **13 Apr** Portsmouth Guildhall **15 Apr** Bristol Colston Hall **16 Apr** London Brixton Academy
www.liquidskin.co.uk

PUFF DADDY
Bring rotting fruit. In big baskets.
4 Apr Birmingham NEC **6 Apr** Manchester Evening News Arena **7 Apr** London Wembley Arena
www.puffdaddy.com

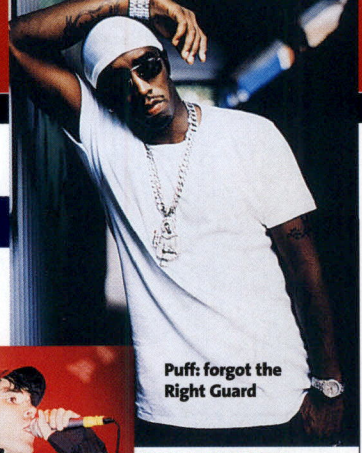

Charlatans: no good at maths

THE CHARLATANS
Tim Burgess takes time off from sunning himself in LA for some UK dates.
21 Apr Newcastle City Hall **22 Apr** Blackpool Empress Ballroom **24 Apr** Brighton Centre **25 Apr** Bristol Colston Hall
www.thecharlatans.com


Brown: nosey parka

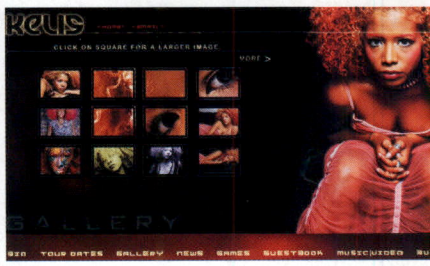
THE CURE
Robert Smith keeps himself in dinners with this one-off date.
22 Apr London Wembley Arena
www.thecure.com

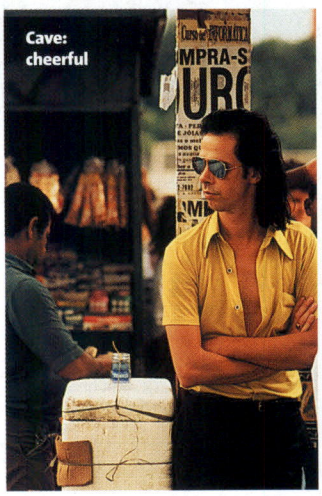
PAUL WELLER
Good news for Fred Perry – the Modfather's back!
17 Apr Stoke Trentham Gardens **18 Apr** Newcastle City Hall **21 Apr** Bridlington Spa Pavilion **22 Apr** Preston Guildhall **23 Apr** Leicester De Montfort Hall **25 Apr** Reading Rivermead **26 Apr** Plymouth Pavilions **27 Apr** Bristol Colston Hall **29/30 Apr** Guildford Civic Hall **2/3 May** Royal Albert Hall
www.columbia.edu/~als3/splinter.html


Puff: forgot the Right Guard

bit repetitive at about, ooh, track 42.
www.unofficial-mudhoney.com *Fan site that features almost everything ever written about the Yank slackers.*

The Mission
Tower Of Strength **SPECTRUM** ★
With The Cure making something of a comeback at the moment, it was perhaps inevitable that lesser Goth outfits would want to cash in on the cider-and-black market. The Mission, were, of course, bloody awful, but at least tracks like *Beyond The Pale* bring back happy memories of singer Wayne Hussey getting thrown off the James Whale show for being too drunk to talk.
www.themissionuk.com *Official site*




Cave: cheerful

Devil You Know. More laughs than a million nights with Henry Rollins.
www.iae.nl/users/maes/cave/index.html *Aptly entitled 'Nick Cave's Collector's Hell', this site collects set-lists from every show Cave plays.*

Ghostface Killah
Supreme Clientele **EPIC** ★★★★
It seems that every week there's a new release from a member of the ever expanding Wu-Tang Clan. This is still good stuff, though – produced by Wu maestro RZA, it mixes hard-as-nails production with a lyrical deftness that should confuse the Staines massive, especially as many of these tracks are based on the strange Wu religion of Mathematics.
www.algonet.se/~blindman/index.html *Superb fan-site with a great collection of sound and video files.*

Kelis
Kaleidoscope **VIRGIN** ★★★★
There's more to this big-haired diva than just screaming 'I HATE YOU SO MUCH RIGHT NOW!'. Like Macy Gray's stroppier younger sister, Kelis has a sense of fun you don't get from most of her peers – on *Mars* she even describes a trip to outer space. She might not like her ex-boyfriends, but it seems she's 'down' with little green men.
www.myhreco.com/kelis *Tour dates, releases and a mix and match game. See also* ***www.kelis.co.uk***

Mudhoney
March To Fuzz **SUB POP** ★★★
Cool for about 15 seconds in the early 90s, Seattle's Mudhoney had Sonic Youth and Nirvana predicting they were going to take grunge to a new level. Sadly, as this 52-track compilation shows, they just couldn't progress from their two chords to ever really touch the mainstream. *Touch Me I'm Sick* still has students pogoing during Fresher's Week, but otherwise it all gets a bit repetitive at about, ooh, track 42.
www.unofficial-mudhoney.com *Fan site that features almost everything ever written about the Yank slackers.*

Various
Ordinary Decent Criminal Soundtrack **EAST WEST** ★★★★
Ordinary Decent Criminal is a third-rate Kevin Spacey movie overshadowed by *American Beauty*, but the soundtrack's good. Despite Bis's 2 Unlimited tribute *Eurodisco* and Shack's lovely *I Want You*, it's Damon Albarn's songs that really grab you, with more heartbreakers proving he hasn't quite got over Justine yet.
www.geocities.com/Hollywood/5286/Spacey/spacey.html *Find out if all those Spacey rumours are true.*

'Mops! Only £1 a time!'

CLASSIC ALBUM

JESUS & MARY CHAIN

Psychocandy **BLANCO Y NEGRO (1985)**
One of the first signings to Alan McGee's now-defunct Creation label, the Mary Chain created the prototype for Oasis. Think about it – they had two feuding brothers (Jim and William Reid), a penchant for 'borrowing' long-forgotten 60s riffs and an heroic capacity for bodily abuse. Released 15 years ago, their debut album, *Psychocandy*, hasn't been matched for visceral rock excitement since, well, *Definitely Maybe*. And Bobby Gillespie drums on it, too. Time to pay homage.
discserver.snap.com/Indices/7665.html *This is a Jesus & Mary Chain messageboard, where you can discover what the pair are up to now. If you really want to, that is.*

They came from garage land

PUNK Malcolm McLaren is standing for Mayor. Look what happened last time they let him loose...

Buzzcocks.com

www.buzzcocks.com ★★★★

Straight outta Bolton, the 'Cocks fused punk's passion with power-pop know-how to great effect. Similarly, the site mixes fan pages with those maintained by Buzzcocks mainman Pete Shelley. Although it is a touch fragmented, there's an impressive array of things to see and do here – including an uncensored, new homoerotic Buzzcocks video, if you're interested.

Gener@tion WWW

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/6464/

★★★

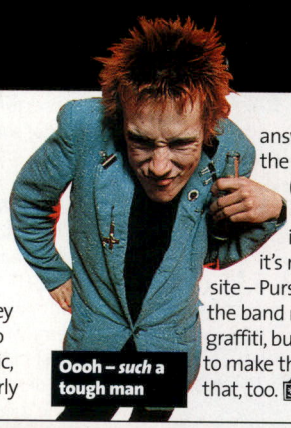
Billy Idol might have ended up as a cartoon punk, but he started out in Generation X (probably while Douglas Coupland was still at college), who were... cartoon punks. Still, significant slices of the Net are dedicated to the white-haired *White Wedding* singer, and this is the oldest; visually striking, but a bit lacking in depth. Fitting, really.

Information Libre – The Official Sham 69 Website

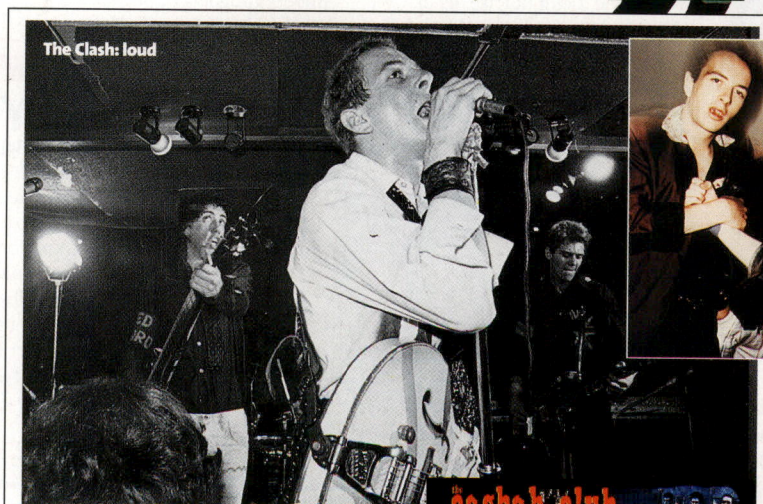
www.sham69.com

★★★

Jimmy Pursey's motley crew always strove to be linked to the public, and here they regularly answer questions from the Net-surfing masses (albeit often evasively). Fun and informative, but it's not the prettiest site – Pursey may have got the band name from scrawled graffiti, but there's no need to make the site look like that, too.



Oooh – *such* a tough man



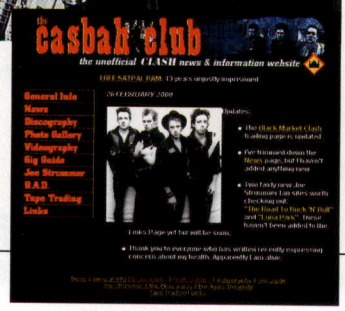
The Clash: loud

The Casbah Club

casbahclub.tripod.com ★★★★★

the net ★★★★★ AWARD

Back in the 70s, Westway warriors The Clash inspired a host of angry young men to pick up guitars. They still arouse passion, but these days it's in HTML. This is about the best Clash site, combining the sort of exhaustive information overload that nutty fans produce with a tastefully understated lay-out which wouldn't be out of place on a corporate Web page. If you can't get enough of Strummer, Jones, Simonon and Headon, it's time to rock the Casbah.



WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: REX, RETNA

best music sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND OUT ABOUT MP3s?

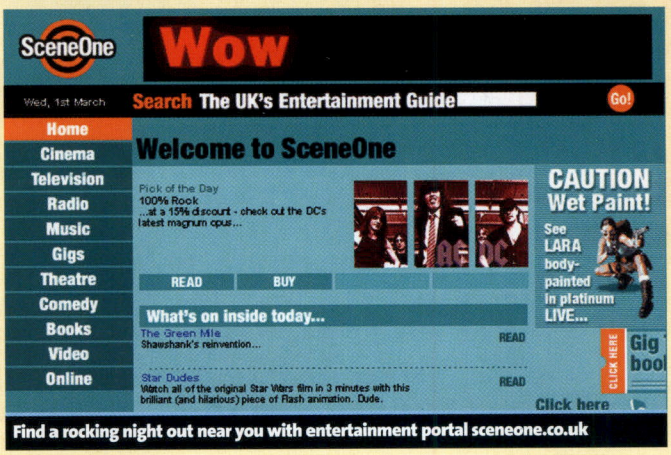
www.mp3.com
The official site, with heaps of downloads and exclusive content.
mp3.lycos.com
Browse the world of MP3s using a comprehensive search engine.
www.mp3now.com
One of the most popular MP3 portals, now expanding into the UK.
www.mp3board.com
Impressive database, searchable by either artist name or song title.

POST MY BAND'S MP3s?

www.crunch.co.uk
Signs artists exclusively for the site.
www.peoplesound.com
A popular unsigned band portal.
www.vitaminic.co.uk
New, professional-looking MP3 site.

FIND A BAND SITE?

www.ubl.com
Make this the first stop on your quest – for its huge search engine.
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with tons of links.
www.musicsearch.com
Find artist sites or music services.



Find a rocking night out near you with entertainment portal sceneone.co.uk

www.wallofsound.com
Links, news and features from the US.

VIEW THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS?

www.rollingstone.com
The well-written US publication features extra online content from the print version.
www.music365.co.uk
Enjoyable features and news from the 365 Corporation.
www.qonline.com
Increasingly essential online version of the popular magazine.
www.dotmusic.com
British site for all rock and pop news and links.

BUY NEW CDs?

www.audiostreet.com
A cheap and very easy-to-navigate CD store, with a large back catalogue.
www.boxman.co.uk
Competitive and easy on the eye.
www.jungle.com
Cheap and cheerful shopping portal.
www.yalplay.com
Popular CD and video store.

FIND GIGS AND TOURS?

www.ticketlinks.com
Full database of musical events.
www.aloud.com
Brilliant search engine for live events.
www.sceneone.co.uk
Entertainment portal.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.punk
Where punk still hasn't died.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the list at ***www.virtuetv.com*** and keep up to date with new shows.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/1794/chat.html
Rough-and-ready punk room.

Looking for more Music sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

Official Ramones

www.officialramones.com ★★★★
The hirsute leather-wearers made a racket in New York that reverberated across the Atlantic and inspired dozens of crap punk bands, but don't hold it against them. This multimedia show has much for fans to admire – if in annoying pop-up window form. Perhaps best to avoid the picture gallery, though.

'Was this the barn you wanted, sir?'

Siouxsie and the Banshees

www.vamp.org/Siouxsie ★★★
Before going on to define Goth, Siouxsie Sioux started out pushing punk's profile by being, er, female; and commendably, the group disbanded when the Pistols reformed. This is an attractive site, more so because it avoids black and opts for tasteful design, although it could use a bit more archive text information from the heady days of punk.

Katie's punk/ski trip was going well

The Official Sex Pistols Page

www.virginrecords.com/sex_pistols/home.html ★★★
Virgin were the third label in eight months to sign the Pistols for big bucks back in 1977, and this site was set up when the original foursome recently reconvened for even more filthy lucre. There's a video clip from 1977, a RealAudio slideshow and a detailed history of the band, but it's all a touch too pink and yellow for ocular comfort.

The Punk Page

www.thepunkpage.com ★★★
Americans didn't 'get' punk for two decades, although they went mad when they did – as witnessed by this sprawling (yet minimalist) site. From here you can get to hundreds of fanzine pages, and although there isn't much to do on the site, it will take you wherever you want to go.

BAND NAMES

DAFT PUNKS

The good thing about punk is that anyone can do it. The bad thing is that they often do. Often bands never match the creativity achieved when coming up with the name, but at least it makes the *NME*'s Gig Guide amusing reading. All the following have links from The Punk Page (see left) or Yahoo!: Angry Samoans; Bucket of Monkey; But I'm With Jimmy; Citizens Against Bland Chicken; The Clap; Darkest of the Hillside Thickets; The Disasterbators; Don't Hit your Sister; Eww...You're a Girl and Girls Suck; God Bless my Kitchen; The Greased Scotsmen; Lionel Richie's Head; Lynyrd's Innards; Mary Tyler Morphine; Planet of Pants; The Potty Mouths; Shave Your Legs Chewbacca; Throw it at Your Brother; and Wrath of the Left Hand of Burns. Aah – sheer poetry.

Totally Damned

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Towers/4359/damned.html ★★★★
The first punks to release a single, The Damned are responsible for unleashing Captain Sensible on the world. The founder members long since fell out and squabble to this day – and you can read the gory story on this extensive (if slightly difficult to read because of its Goth stylings) fan site.

Try as he might, Captain couldn't finish off his vampi

Toy Dolls Homepage

www.wisetec.com/toydolls ★★★★
By its very nature punk was often comic – have you heard Sid Vicious's *My Way*? – but the Toy Dolls made a living out of acting the giddy goat following their seminal cover of *Nellie the Elephant*. Strangely popular overseas, they've inspired numerous sites, including this multimedia extravaganza. All together now: 'Wooooaaaaaahhhhhh...'

streets
online
alphabetstreet.co.uk
Buy books on-line, up to 50% off best selling books, free delivery in the UK
audiostreet.co.uk
Buy music on-line, a whole range of CDs from £9.99, free delivery in the UK
DVDstreet.co.uk
Buy DVDs on-line, the UK's most comprehensive DVD store with up to 40% off and free delivery in the UK
gamesstreet.co.uk
Buy games on-line, the UK's premier games site for all platforms, up to 40% off, free delivery in the UK
Entertainment shopping made easy @ streets online

Scooby Doo: predictable

Scooby.cartoonnetwork.com

scooby.cartoonnetwork.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Scooby-Doo, despite being yellower than a banana (and a dog), managed to solve enough mysteries to make Columbo jealous. Along with his trusty gang of four, and occasionally aided by his pesky nephew Scrappy Doo, he put a spanner in the works of many a criminal, who would have got away with it 'if it wasn't for those pesky kids...' Somehow it was always Scooby and his best mate Steve McManaman who ended up being the heroes, even though they were thick as two short planks.

The Complete Guide to D&D

www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/Studio/8697 ★★★★

At the time when Dungeons and Dragons was being played during breaktime in schools around the country, there was only one reason to get out of bed on a Saturday morning – and that was to watch the cartoon of the same name. Six kids go on a fairground ride and are transported into a world of, erm, dungeons and dragons. A surefire recipe for success.

The Dangermouse Index Page

www.dangermouse.org ★★★

'He's The Best. He's The Greatest. He's The Greatest Secret Agent In The World! He's The Ace – He's Amazing! He's the Strongest, He's The Quickest, He's The Best!' There's not a lot else need be said about the cartoon answer to 007, fighting the forces of evil in the form of Baron Greenback with the help of his sidekick, Penfold, voiced by rotund sitcom star Terry Scott. Made you proud to be English.

'I'll get us a cab, lads'

Go-Go Gadget

gogogadget.simplenet.com ★★★

It's bad enough when a good book is completely ruined by making it into a film (anybody seen *The Beach*?), but to ruin a fantastic cartoon with that aberration of a flick last year is outrageous. The original Inspector Gadget took on the MAD empire with gimmicks Bond would die for. Find out more here...

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: SCOPE FEATURES

They don't make 'em like they used to!

TIMELESS 'TOONS Kids of today – they wouldn't know a classic cartoon if it bit them on the backside. Now when I were a nipper...

Battle of the Planets Universe

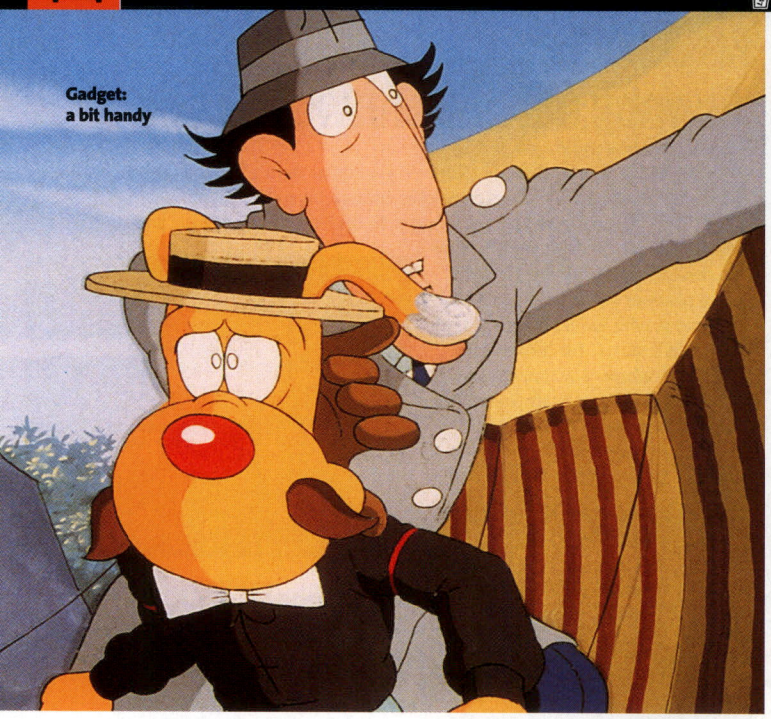
www.impacthosting.com/ade/botp ★★★

There's no denying that *Battle of the Planets* was a wonderful show, as five teenagers with magical powers repeatedly saved the Earth from a powerful foe (an original plotline, you'll agree). Unfortunately the amount of analysis and in-depth discussion of the cartoon on this site is equivalent to an A-Level student's appraisal of a Shakespeare text. It was good, but not *that* good.

Bedrock 2000

www.bedrock2000.com ★★★★

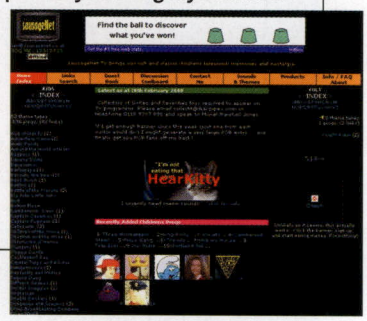
The modern Stone Age family are up-to-date enough to have made it onto the Net. Send your friends a *Flintstones* e-card, chat with other fans and, if you're really bored, play a version of Hangman called Hang Fred, which seems a bit harsh on the big fella to us. Thankfully there's no sign of anything to do with that travesty of a movie.


Gadget: a bit handy

ANCIENT ANIMATION

TALK OF THE 'TOONS

By the time you've read these reviews, visited the sites and spent ages listening to theme tunes and catchphrases you thought you'd never hear again, you'll be going all misty-eyed and sentimental about your misspent youth. So, while your nostalgia glands are working overtime, take a trip to SausageNet TV at ***www.sausagenet.co.uk***. Covering 134 programmes and 85 theme tunes, you'll be reliving your adolescence for the whole of the next week.



The Thundercats Alliance Web Site

members.aol.com/cassio2x/index.htm
★★★★

Ignoring the fact that this site looks like something Vivienne Westwood would design on speed, it's remarkable for no other reason than the fact that it offers whole episodes of the adventures of the fearless felines in RealVideo format. The animators might have made Lion-O leader of the Thundercats, but ask any viewer who they like best and Snarfer is bound to come out a clear winner.

It's the Wacky Races!

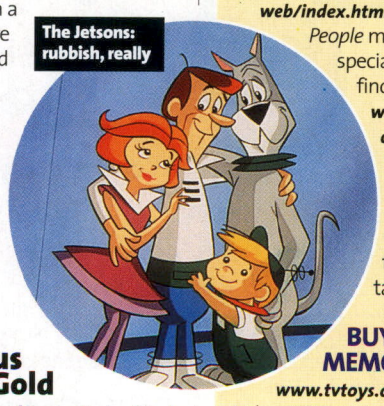
www.hotink.com/wacky ★★★

It's a sad state of affairs when a sporting spectacle as dull as the Oxford vs Cambridge boat race can continue for nigh on 150 years, yet *real* racing such as the *Wacky Races* is no longer with us. Who can forget the precocious Peter Perfect, the heavenly Penelope Pitstop or the evil duo Dastardly and Muttley, to say nothing of the bumbling Anthill Mob? Relive those glory days over and over again.

The Jetsons Unofficial Home

www.cybercomm.nl/~ivo ★★★

If you can imagine the Flintstones being magically transported into the space age, minus the dinosaurs, then you've got the Jetson family. And where Fred and Barney made life fun through a variety of bizarre dinosaur-related household appliances, the Jetsons had every futuristic gadget a kid could want as they flew through space.


The Jetsons: rubbish, really

The Mysterious Cities of Gold

www.unity.fg.co.uk/mcog/index.html
★★★

An alternative to nearly every other classic cartoon, which saw goodies beat baddies in an ever-recurring scenario, *TMCG* was an ongoing saga. This epic adventure featured six explorers – three adults and three kids – in a voyage to the New World to discover the Mysterious Cities built by the Heva people.

best TV sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND PROGRAMME GUIDES FOR POPULAR SHOWS?

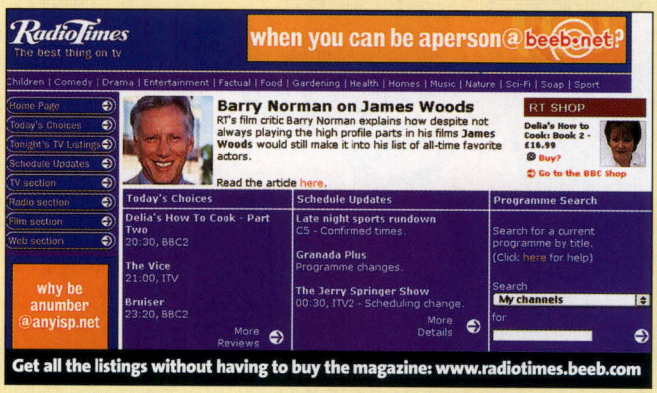
www.onlyfools.net
A massive shrine to *Only Fools And Horses* by the official fan club.
www.pazsuz.com/hiptv.html
One-stop shop for info on over 255 popular Stateside shows.
www.snpp.com/episodeguide.html
Every *Simpsons* episode listed.
www.beef-cake.com
At-a-glance guide to *South Park*.

LOOK UP MY FAVOURITE TV PERSONALITY?

infospace.com/celeb/celebrity.htm
Easy-to-use celeb search engine.
www.pathfind er.com/people/web/index.html
People magazine's speciality is B-list celebs: find your fave.
www.nyt.co.uk/celebrit.htm
Book a celebrity.
www.jerryspringer.com
Everyone's favourite talk-show host.

BUY TV MEMORABILIA?

www.tvtoys.com
Pick up TV toys, books – and more.
www.universal-studios.net/movieprops.html
Log in and head for the shop – a Jean-Luc Picard doll for a mere $35?
www.noveltytogs.com
A great source for *South Park* and *Simpsons* stuff in pounds sterling.
www.ctvb.com
Memorabilia by mail-order.



FIND TV LISTINGS?

www.toaster.co.uk
Well-presented electronic programme guide – also lets you search for shows by genre.
www.freeserve.co.uk/tvnradio
A quick and complete guide, plus a handy instant soap update.
www.radiotimes.beeb.com
Britain's favourite listings magazine finally goes online.
www.digiguide.co.uk
Customised guide to British telly, with schedules and reviews.

WATCH TV?

www.virtuetv.co.uk
Live events, documentaries and an archive of classic films.
www.beeb.com
Watch news or programme snippets in RealVideo.
www.broadcast.com
If it's happening live, it'll be listed somewhere in Broadcast.
www.livetv.wwitv.com
Connects you to more than 100 live TV stations from over 40 countries.

FIND TV NEWS AND INFO?

tv.cream.org
One of the best resources on the Net for long-dead shows.
www.bigglethwaite.com
Everything you could possibly need to know about British TV online.
www.ultimatetv.com
American-influenced site with links; great 'Ask Mr TV' facility, too.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.tv.cartoon-network
Ostensibly this is a Cartoon Network newsgroup, but there's plenty of general 'toon chat too.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Want to find out about writing TV shows? Mail ***majordomo@spies.com*** with 'info episodic-1' in the message.

GET CHATTING?

tnt.turner.com/series/flintstones
Talk to fellow Bedrock fans online.

Looking for more Television sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

Guy Ritchie is on the Web

George Lucas is on the Web

Daniel Myrick is on the Web

So why isn't your film?

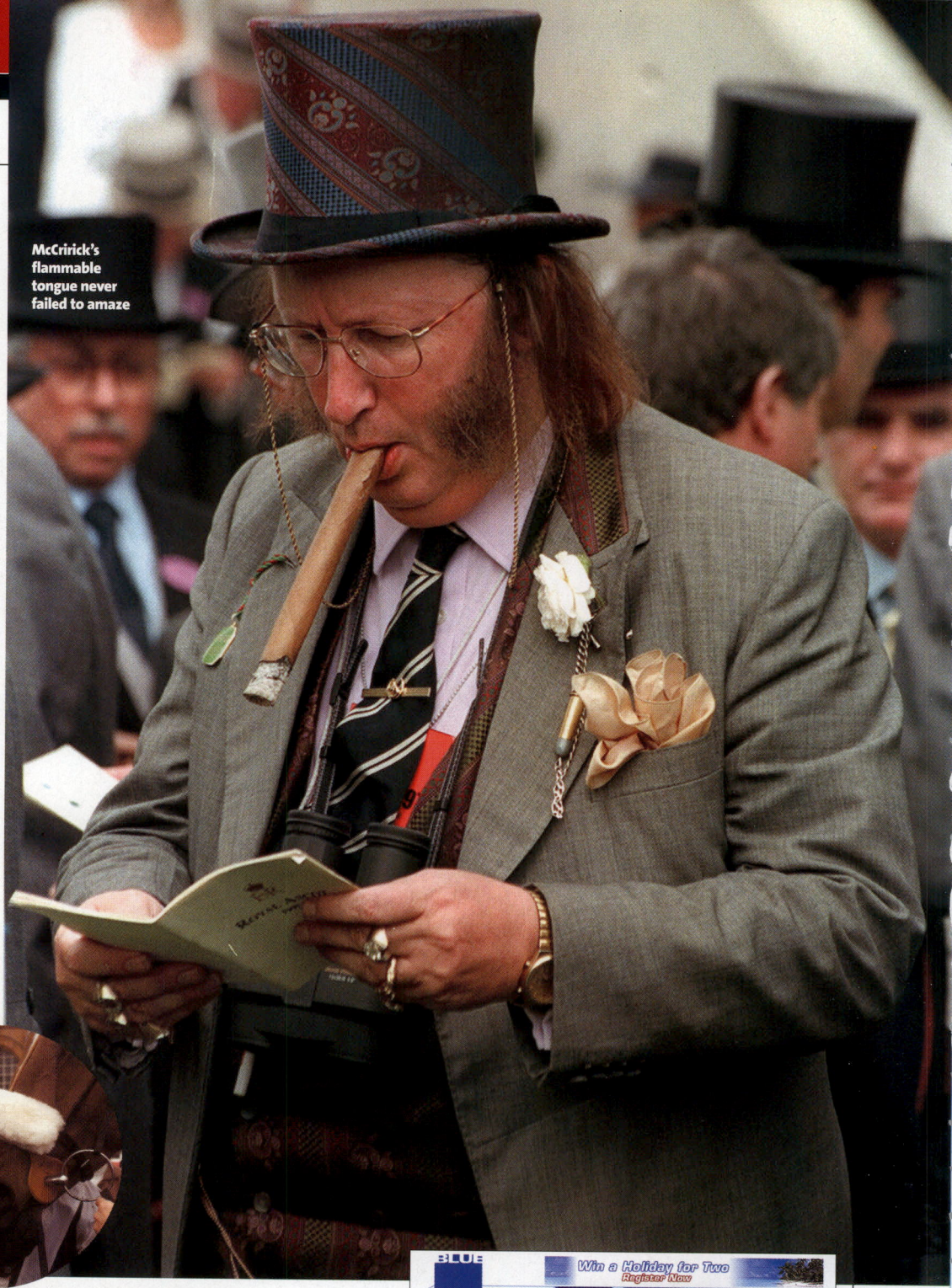
If your film is on the net, you never know who could end up seeing it. From March 1st, there'll be a new space on the net, getoutthere.bt.com, a site dedicated to filmmakers and writers who want their work to be seen. You can upload live action/animated films or scripts. Once there, they can be seen by thousands and entered into competitions judged by industry names. We can't guarantee who'll be in the audience, but we can guarantee it's the first step in getting one.

Get out there.

getoutthere.bt.com BT

'I've got £5 that says...'

GAMBLING The Grand National's just round the corner – so where's the best place to go if you fancy a flutter?



McCririck's flammable tongue never failed to amaze

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: PA, EMPICS, REX

Ladbrokes

www.ladbrokes.com ★★

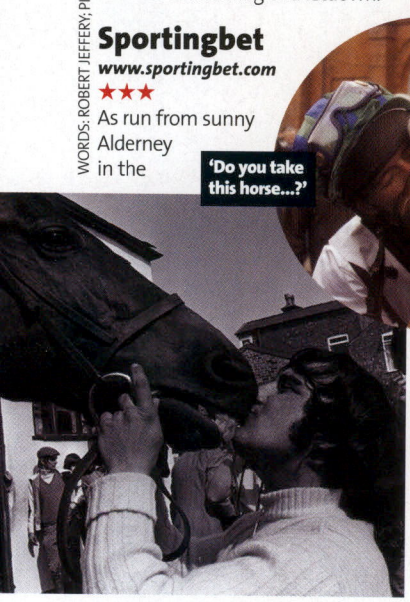
The biggest and best-known bookmakers in the business are finally online – but that's where the trouble starts. The obvious choice ***www.ladbrokes.co.uk*** offers no online gambling, directing you instead to ***www.bet.co.uk*** which, er, only covers football (for the moment at least). The main site at ***www.ladbrokes.com*** covers all the major sports pretty comprehensively – but, given the Net's ability to simplify things, it remains something of a letdown.

Sportingbet

www.sportingbet.com

★★★

As run from sunny Alderney in the delightful Channel Isles – which, of course, means there's no tax to pay on your bets. Which is nice. Sportingbet may not be an established name but they certainly seem to know what they're doing online... simply open an account and watch your money disappear.



'Do you take this horse...?'

Sporting Index

www.sportingindex.com ★★★★

Spread betting, to misquote the much-maligned and sorely missed Saint and Greavsie, is a funny old game. In a nutshell, you're gambling on a 'spread of results' (such as the number of goals in a football match or finishers in a race) rather than a single one. The skill is greater, the excitement heightened – but, unfortunately, you can end up losing more than your original stake. Which isn't nice. If you think you can handle it, there's no better place to start than this leading sport-spreaders' excellent site.

Blue Square

www.bluesq.com ★★★★★

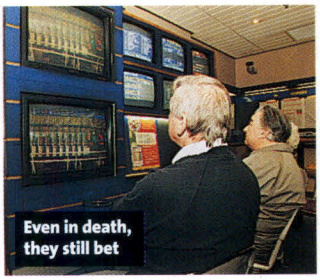
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Blue Square has quickly established itself as the best online bookmaker, with a solid reputation and easy, jargon-free usability. Frequently updated odds on all major sports form the bread in this cash-rich sandwich, but the real meat is the all-pervading sense of fun; off-the-wall wagers even extend into the world of soap operas (they offer six-to-four-on that one of the Battersbys ends up in the slammer this year). Suggest a flutter and they'll send you the odds. An outstanding example of the Web working as it should.

Sports Adviser

www.sportsadviser.com ★★★

Not a bookies but an advice service, boasting tips and features on all manner of sporting events. Much of the content has to be paid for, but what you get for free (including


Even in death, they still bet

'paddock assessments' prior to big races) will prove endlessly useful. Particularly intriguing is the odds comparison of prices from major bookmakers, which exposes the often ridiculous differences.

Sports.com Tips

Tips.sports.com ★★★★

Arm yourself before you go into battle with the bookie – ***sports.com*** is a superlative tips service that not only provides background stats and info on upcoming events (for everything but horseracing) but also offers expert tips and features explaining how to get started in online gambling. Indispensable.

SSP International Sports Betting

www.ssp.co.uk ★★★

Middle-of-the-road sports book which offers a bafflingly diverse range of sports, from international football to – wait for it – sailing and giant slalom. The navigation around the site is a tiny bit fiddly, but some of the intriguing variations on the usual bets make it well worth a look.

Totalbet

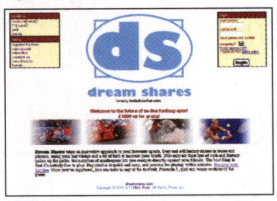
www.totalbet.com ★★★★

One for the diehard gambler – i.e. someone who doesn't think a 'trixie' is a diminutive mythical creature much favoured by Enid Blyton readers. This Tote-run online service specialises, as you'd expect, in helping you lose your shirt on the gee-gees, but it also does a sterling service – by way of an extremely user-friendly interface – for other sports too.

BETTING

LOSE YOUR SHIRT

If you fancy having a flutter but can't – due to lack of funds, being underage or simply being fearful of losing your hard-earned – there are still online alternatives. Some of the sites featured will let you 'place' pretend bets to get a feel for gambling; or try ***www.wallstreetsports.com***, which lets you manage a portfolio of US sports stars. Dream Shares (***www.dreamshares.com***) is a UK-based equivalent, where you can own shares in football teams, golfers or F1 drivers (rugby is served by ***www.scrum.com***). For the ultimate involvement, however, part-own your own racehorse at ***www.maryreveleyracing.com*** – although the starting price of £3000 per nag might put off the casual punter...



'Watford? Sell, sell, sell!'

Victor Chandler

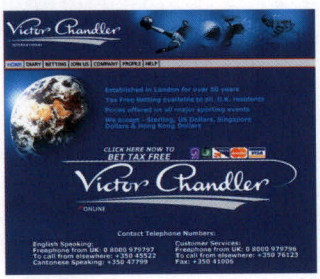
www.victorchandler.com ★★★★★

Victor Chandler have been around for 50 years now, but they're not too traditional to make a seamless transition online. This is by far the most attractive and easiest to use of the Web bookies; with an established brand name and phone support, you could do worse than start here.

William Hill

www.willhill.com ★★★★

Hills will take a bet on just about anything you care to name – from the chances of your son playing for England to snow at Christmas – although only more conventional wagers are on view here. The pleasing layout and concise explanations make things straightforward enough even for novices.



'I bet it's going to rain'

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE LATEST NEWS AND SCORES?

espn.go.com
Scores from every sport, plus news with a distinctly American bias.
www.sportlive.net
This *Express*-backed site gives a useful smattering of news and info.
www.soccernet.com
Scoreflashes from all UK games.
www.sporting-life.com
News, scores and betting advice from the paper of the same name.

FIND TOP FOOTBALL SITES?

www.zoofootball.com
Excellent new football portal with latest news and features.
www.footballnews.co.uk
Now with added Des Lynam.
www.teamtalk.com
Exclusive news from major clubs.
www.soccer-links.com
Well-organised and searchable links for sites across the world.

FIND STARS' SITES?

www.michaelowen.org
For fans of the golden boy.
jordan.sportsline.com
Where Michael Jordan apparently answers your emails personally.
www.tigerwoods.com
Chat live with the golf superstar.

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE?

www.planetfootball.com
Hub site for English football clubs' audio broadcasts.
www.sportlist.com
Guide to every sport show on British TV.
www.talksport.net
Listen to the national radio station's sports coverage live.

www.broadcast.com/sports/soccer
A variety of teams in RealAudio.

FIND THE BEST SITES FOR POPULAR SPORTS?

www.cricinfo.com
The Internet Movie Database of cricket sites.
www.planet-rugby.com
Comprehensive magazine on everything oval-balled.
www.pga.com
Golf's governing body scores a hole-in-one with this informative site.
www.boxingonline.com
The online king of the ring.

FIND FIXTURES?

www.sportcal.co.uk/public/online.htm
Events and sponsors for five years.
www.pa.press.net/sport/calendar
Useful guide to the sporting year.
www.sportlive.net
Join for your own email sports diary.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.rec.gambling.misc
Tips and advice.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the (mostly American-based) 'Sports Gambling' list from ***www.bgsports.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.bendy.demon.co.uk/ptp/ptpindex.htm
Online chat for racegoers.

The UK's No1 online betting service

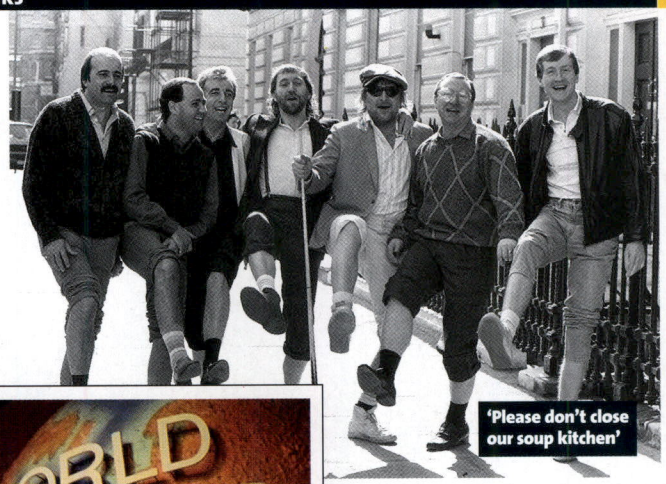
BLUE SQ.

www.bluesq.com

Over 18s only. Rules apply – available on request at www.bluesq.com

'I'll take the difficult pink'

SNOOKER Thought only exciting sports got onto the Web? Oh no, my friend – snooker's here as well


'Please don't close our soup kitchen'

Embassy World Snooker

www.embassysnooker.com ★★★

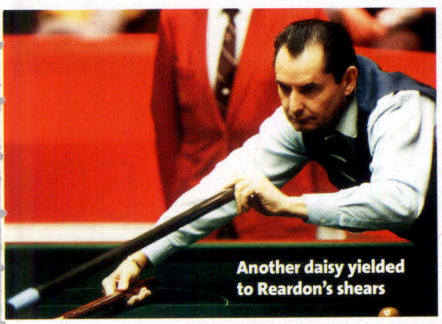
This might provide news and tournament results, but then you'd expect that from an official site. The only added value is a few pictures, a bit of background to the game and some retrospective moments. It's worth keeping tabs on, though, because Embassy sponsors the World Championship – and we know you're *dying* to know who won the China International.

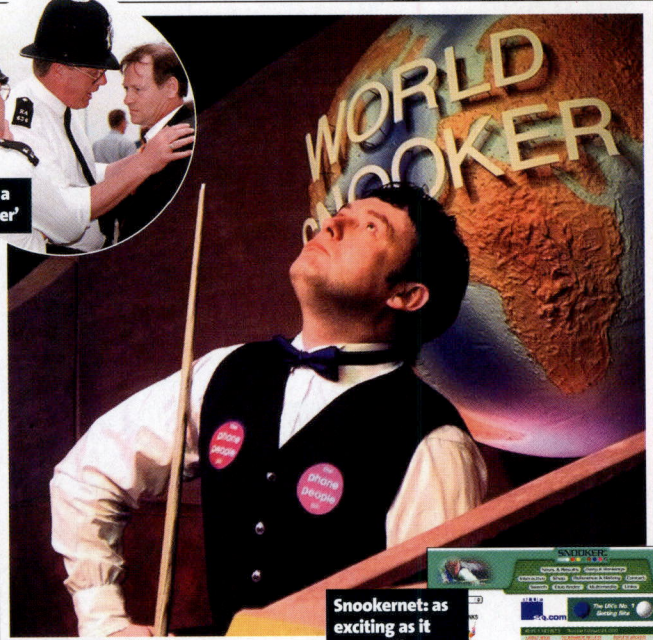
'I'm stuck in a bubble, officer'

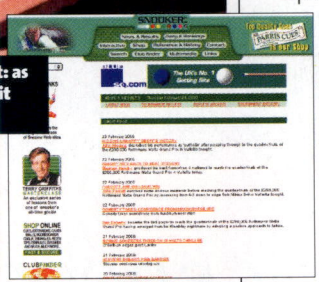
Jimmy White Snooker Site

www.rjphillips.demon.co.uk/jwss ★★

He might not have won the World Championship, but he'll always have a place in the hearts of anyone who's watched him entertain the masses like no other player could.


Another daisy yielded to Reardon's shears




Snookernet: as exciting as it gets, sadly

Snookernet

www.snookernet.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Snooker's not really exciting unless you've got a bespectacled Irishman trying to beat a dominant ginger bloke to the title of World Champion gone midnight on a Sunday. It seems amazing that 18 million people watched the 1985 final – you'd be lucky to get 18,000 today, although BBC2 stills drops *The League Of Gentlemen* to follow the 'action'. For remaining fans this is a fine site, with tips to improve your game.

For that reason it's nice to see an Internet tribute to Jimmy. Where 'Trevor the Cod' comes in is anyone's guess, however.

Snooker Loopy

www.btinternet.com/~snook-support ★★★

Sadly this doesn't hark back to that unforgettable time when top snooker players collaborated to record the eminently forgettable song of the same name, but it is a fair effort at a fan site. Despite the dodgy design, the player profiles are interesting and there are some top video clips of world-beating stick technique.

Willie Thorne Play Better Snooker

www.williethorne.co.uk ★★★

Gary Lineker's best mate and the baldest man in the game wants to help us play better snooker. What a nice man. He's even gone so far as to put video clips of his lessons on this site, although you have to register first to be able to view them. But the main reason to visit has to be to play the fantastic Java snooker game.

best sport sites ★★★★★ where can I...

JOIN A TEAM?

www.sportlive.net

Check out the 'grass roots' section for links to hundreds of local teams.

www.sportsteam.co.uk

Build yourself a mini-site for your club, highlighting news and fixtures.

BUY ACCESSORIES ONLINE?

www.newitts.com

The best online sports store.

www.kitbag.com

Shirts for most major football teams, plus cricket and rugby equipment.

LEARN A MARTIAL ART?

www.blackbeltmag.com

Choose your discipline then learn to master the basics at this site.

www.kungfu.cc

Useful kung-fu course: learn online.

LEARN THE RULES?

www-uk.cricket.org

Cricket's home page explains the lbw rule for confused Americans.

www.referee.com

You're certain to get your legal queries answered here. Just don't argue with what they tell you.

FIND A NEW SPORT?

www.sportszine.co.uk

Comprehensive links to UK sites, from athletics to wrestling.

www.sports365.co.uk

Great new sport portal full of interesting links and information.

GET OFF THE COUCH?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk/sport

Online ticket ordering for all major UK sports events.

Shirts, balls, boots? Beat the queues with the online sports shop at www.kitbag.com

www.premierswap.com

The site that claims to be an 'Internet market' for fans, featuring ticket swaps and sales.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.sport.snooker

Catch up on all that scintillating snooker talk with other nuts.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Enjoy all the best sport trivia and rules from ***www.2play.com/surveys.htm***.

GET CHATTING?

www.snookerweb.co.uk

There's a good chat section in this useful snooker portal.

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: EMPICS, PA

New 5 floor shopping mall with over 150 stores now open at 187 Acacia Avenue, 323 London Road, 46a Blackbird Close, 7 Teal Crescent, 3 Union Street.....

www.TheVirtualMall.co.uk

the virtual mall .co.uk

Even in poverty, the Spice Girls kept their dignity

Read all about it

NEWSPAPERS Every national paper is now online – but do any of them compare to the real thing?

Electronic Telegraph

www.telegraph.co.uk ★★★★

Middle England's newspaper makes a clear distinction between its print incarnation and online alternative. The Electronic Telegraph majors on features and extras – many Net-only, including a surprisingly funky student section and a great deal of sport – rather than articles on the merits of rambling and why hanging shouldn't have been abolished (even though it's too good for them). Clearly, the choice of the kids.

The Express

www.lineone.net/express ★★

If editor Rosie Boycott had actively sought to make her site more impenetrable, she couldn't have done much better than this. *The Express*' 'micro edition' boasts comparatively little actual content (news, finance and features is as far as it goes), and what there is remains buried beneath a maze of complex navigation. Like the dull *Daily Mail* clone itself, it's best avoided.

Guardian Unlimited

www.guardianunlimited.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Some newspapers' online versions offer a taster of the print edition, others give a generous helping of news and features, and some offer next to nothing. Then there's *The Guardian*. In just over a year the middle-class liberal's rag of choice has spawned a monster of a site – not just the paper's daily content, but Web-exclusive networks on subjects as diverse as football and shopping. An essential bookmark.

Christopher's faith healer tried her best

The *Mail*'s free gifts were getting out of hand

The Independent

www.independent.co.uk ★★★

Just as dogs grow to look like their owners, so do sites betray the traits of the papers behind them. Thus the *Indie*'s online presence is somewhat bland and unremarkable: the news leaves a lot to be desired, but investment and leisure are amply covered, while the '50 best' guide to a wide variety of subjects is a useful lunchtime-waster. Definitely worth a look.

It.mail

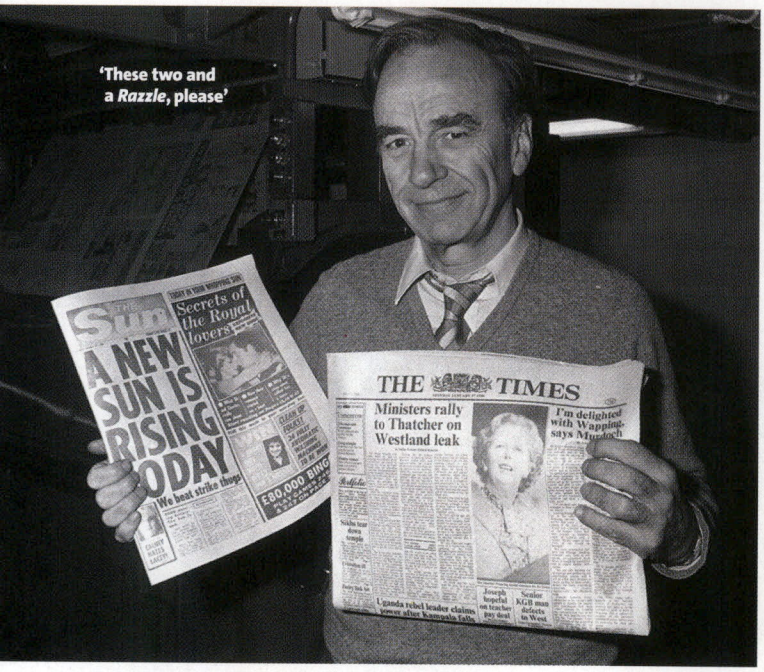
www.dailymail.co.uk ★

Admittedly, *Mail* readers – most of whose technological ambitions probably extend no further than powering up their wheelchairs for reaching the Post Office on pension day – were never likely to be at the forefront of e-publishing. Even so, this is woeful: no news, no features, just the IT section of the paper in electronic form. And that's it. Like the revolution never happened...

MegaStar

www.megastar.co.uk ★

Fair's fair – the *Daily Star* is never likely to walk off with the Pulitzer Prize for outstanding journalism, but the contents of MegaStar makes the smut-ridden print version look like *War And Peace*. Leaving aside the comic-book design and the abandonment of news in favour of poster girls, WWF and a 'wench bench', particular bile must be reserved for the Megastall, an online shopfinder staffed by 'Honest Pete' – a spiv in a cap with a wad of fivers. It's enough to make you question the very point of existence.



The Mirror

www.mirror.co.uk

★★★

Just as it lags behind its red-top rival in the tabloid circulation war, so *The Mirror* is distinctly inferior in the Web stakes, too. While most aspects of the paper are present and correct, many of the stories appear to have been edited in an alarmingly cretinous fashion, while the presentation leaves a lot be desired. Nice to see that the ill-fated 'City Slickers' email details are still available, though – why not send the boys your share tips? You know, just for a laugh...

Bob peered out the porthole for the last time

The Morning Star

www.poptel.org.uk/morning-star

★★

Few may have heard of it (and even fewer buy it nowadays, outside of London council coffeeshops), but there is another national daily newspaper beyond the big nine. The *Morning Star*, a Communist/socialist daily published since 1930, exists largely through reader contributions and the odd car boot sale – and its site is as low-tech as you'd expect, although it does offer a fascinating history of the publication. And it's still more entertaining than the *Daily Star*.

The Sun

www.the-sun.com ★★★★

'Cow That Drinks Tango!' screamed Britain's biggest paper on the day we visited, sensibly ignoring the thousands dead in floods in Mozambique. Yep, *The Sun*'s legendary sense of perspective doesn't disappoint online (just witness the huge popularity of ***www.page3.com***), but that's no bad thing. Most of your soaraway *Sun* favourites are here, as is the majority of the 'news'; and when you can browse through the majestic Deirdre's Photo Casebook from the sanctity of your own PC, how can you complain?

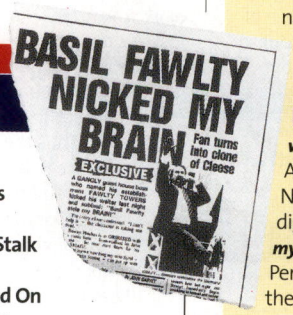
The Times

www.the-times.co.uk ★★★★★

Rupert Murdoch might still be unsure about the merits of the Web, but his broadsheet organ has still ploughed ahead of the competition. *The Times*' online shopping area is a hidden secret all to itself, and the rest of the paper is well represented. Particular respect is due for the archive facility, where every edition since 1996 is available in its entirety, and it's free to search.

LIES

MAKING HEADLINES



The odd *Sun* classic aside, the art of tabloid headline writing has died a painful death in recent years – except in David Sullivan's *Sunday Sport* (*www.sundaysport.co.uk*), where they never let the truth get in the way of a good gag. With *Sport* classics like the following to contend with, who can blame Fleet Street's finest for giving up the ghost?

- Hitler Found Alive!
- Woman Trapped On Bus For 30 Years
- Killer Plants Stalk Queen Mum
- Lucan Spotted On Missing Shergar
- Basil Fawlty Nicked My Brain
- DIY Hubby Stuffs Wife Down Plug
- Husband Cheats On Wife With Tortoise
- Boil In A Bag Girl Lives In Fridge

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: PA, MOVIESTORE COLLECTION

best news sites ★★★★★

where can I...

RECEIVE NEWS?

www.thisislondon.co.uk

Capital-based breaking news from the *Evening Standard*.

pa.press.net

Vast array of news-related services, including a desktop ticker and diary.

FIND LOCAL NEWS?

www.thisis.co.uk

Add the name of your city or county (eg ***www.thisisessex.co.uk***) to get news, chat and events near you.

www.ecola.com/news/press/eu/uk/

Directory of online UK regional newspapers and magazines.

GET AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE?

www.reuters.com/news/

The massive news agency provides rolling headlines and news by topic.

www.cnn.com

From the channel of the same name comes a comprehensive service with audio and video.

COMPILE MY OWN NEWS PAGES?

www.crayon.net

Aka 'Create Your Own Newspaper'. Build a daily digest of headlines.

my.yahoo.com

Personalise a Yahoo! page to get the news you want when you want it.

GET A DIFFERENT SPIN?

www.drudgereport.com

Notorious American columnists who broke the Clinton scandal – and quite a lot more besides.

www.thesmokinggun.com

Material from US government and law enforcement sources – quirky.

FIND WEATHER & TRAVEL?

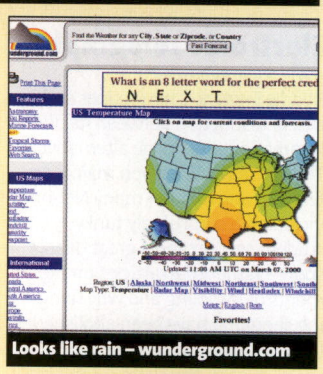
www.wunderground.com

Current conditions and a forecast for any location, anywhere, in colour.

www.theaa.co.uk/motoring/ukroads/traffic.asp

Roadworks, road closures and delays all over the country.

Get your hands on what they didn't want you to see at thesmokinggun.com



Looks like rain – wunderground.com

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

uk.media

Vent your spleen on the media here.

FIND A MAILING LIST?

Try ***www.itn.co.uk/desktopnews/webpage/preferences.htm*** for daily news.

GET CHATTING?

www.news.bbc.co.uk

Head for the 'Talking Point'...

Looking for more News sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

"You girls a bunch of nudists
or are you just short of clothes?"

The Old Man - Stuart Lancaster - *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill! (1965)*

Get 20% Off 100's Of Cult Titles.*

Save 20% on a range of titles, including: *Easy Rider, Apocalypse Now, Barbarella, Bullitt, Quadrophenia, Resevoir Dogs, Pulp Fiction, Planet Of The Apes, Red Dwarf, The Avengers, Dr Who, X Files, Blake Seven.* Free Delivery Worldwide.

www.★.co.uk

www.blackstar.co.uk

the UK's biggest video store

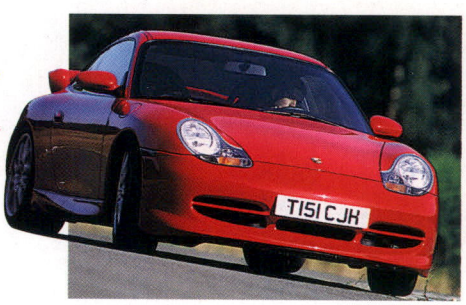
*Offer runs from 1 April to 30 April 2000.

SEE HOW THEY LOOK THEN READ HOW THEY

DRIVE

New Clio
"Nothing less than perfection would suffice after the brilliant Clio Williams. The Sport Clio succeeds brilliantly"

New BMW X5
"The ultimate suburban off-roader. Redefines the class standard for on-road performance and handling"



New Porsche GT3
"Beyond 6100rpm it sounds better than any current Ferrari. The GT3 is the car all 911 nuts have been waiting for. It's fantastic"

New Fiesta
"Still the best-handling car in its class, the Fiesta gets a new face and a range-topping 1.6-litre engine"

AUTOCAR First for new cars every week

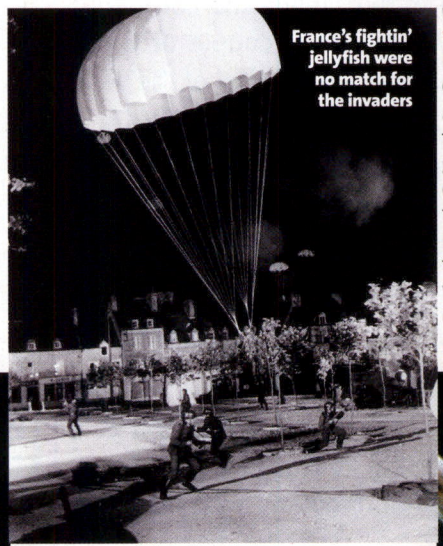
'That looks very familiar...'

LOCATIONS Why not combine your next holiday with a visit to a famous film location? Like these...

Almeria

www.lauderdale-uk.com ★★★

The Web site of this specialist villa rental outfit waxes lyrical on the bird-watching opportunities to be found near the southern Spanish town of Almeria, but strangely neglects to mention the region's biggest claim to fame. Baking sands, distant mountains, cacti... yes, it's where Sergio Leone shot his classic spaghetti Westerns. Or 'paella' Westerns, as you'll be stressing during endless slide-shows inflicted on bored mates on your return.



France's fightin' jellyfish were no match for the invaders

St Mere Eglise

www.normandybattlefields.com ★★★★★

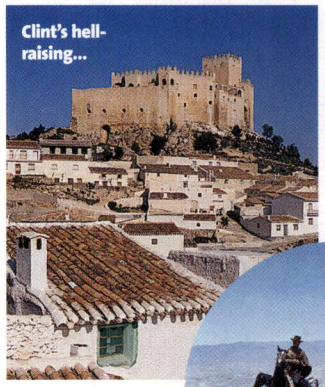
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

A botched drop in the early hours of June 6, 1944, left paratrooper John Steel dangling from the church steeple of this Normandy village, watching helplessly as German defenders shot his fellow grunts from the skies. It's the most famous scene from classic 1962 war movie *The Longest Day* – and this US site will include instructions on how to find the church in a one-day self-drive holiday designed for you. Just select 'American paratroop actions' from the company's 36-item Normandy landings checklist – other points of interest include 'Atrocities against Allied POWs' and 'V-1 rocket sites' – and they'll tailor-make you a tour for £60, as well as recommend local hotels and car rental firms.

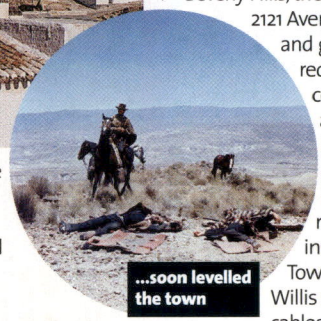
The 'Beach': Phi Phi Le Island, Thailand

www.asiatour.com ★★★★★

Beautiful white beaches. Crystal-clear water. Mighty cliffs climbing into the sky, swathed in lush greenery. And not a chance that freckled-faced teenbait Leonardo DiCaprio will mince across the sand and ruin the view. If you want to discover *The Beach*'s beach for yourself, check out this huge guide to South-East Asia, then book a room online on the island via site sponsor Diethelm Travel.



Clint's hell-raising...



...soon levelled the town

Brainerd, Minnesota

www.brainerd.com ★★

Yah, Brainerd. Snowy home to a pregnant police chief, a scheming car salesman and a sinister statue of ace lumberjack Paul Bunyan, all just a few hours' drive from Fargo, North Dakota – a fact the official site of 'Brainerd Lakes Vacationland' pointedly ignores. What the site has in spades, however, is a fine list of resort accommodation and local events. Book now and you'll be in time to catch the Maple Sugar and Candy Exhibition at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum.

Fox Plaza, Los Angeles

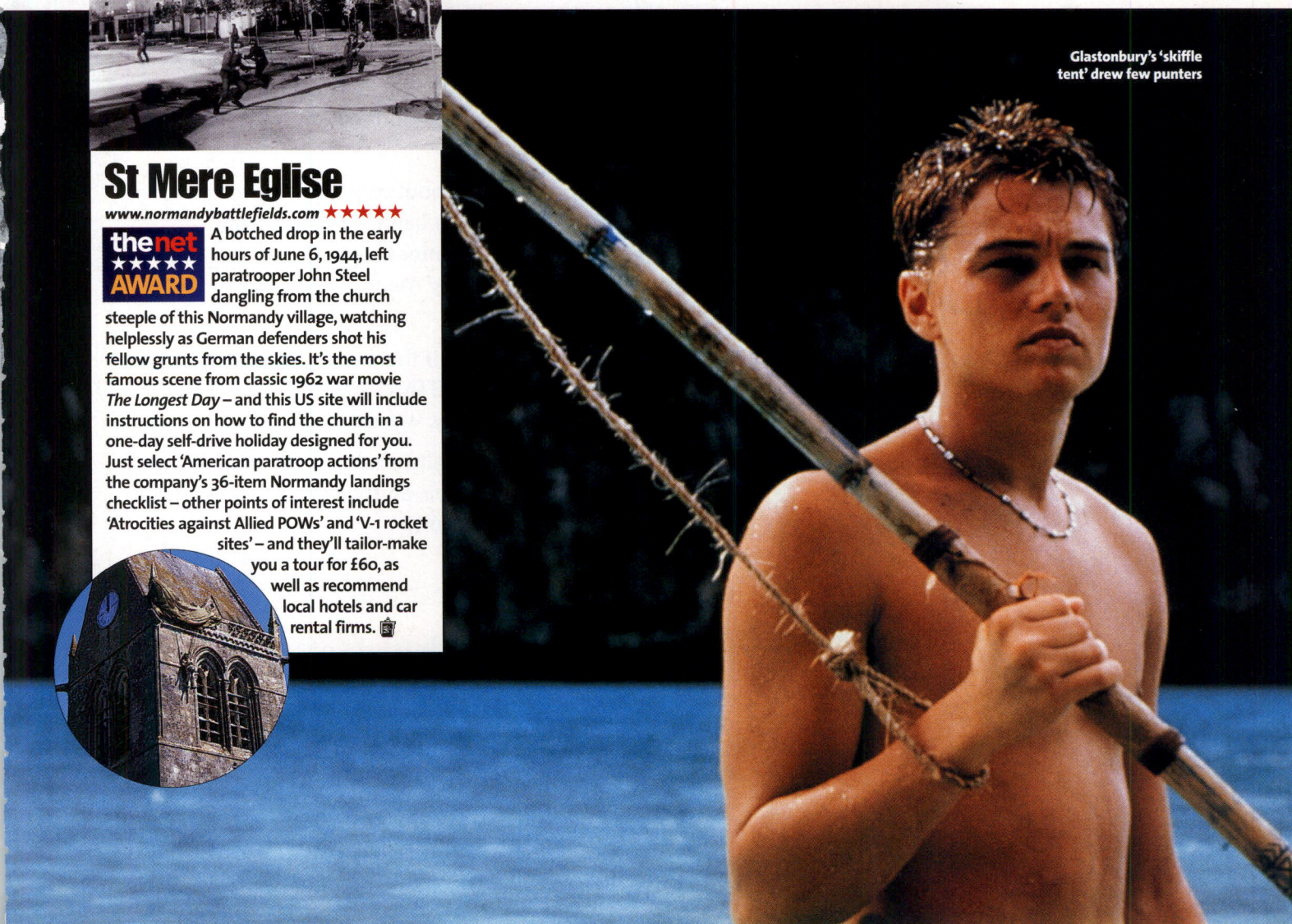
www.labiketours.com ★★★

Action movie fans should sign up for this mountain bike tour of Beverly Hills, then cycle down to 2121 Avenue of the Stars and gaze in awe at this red-and-white confectionery of a skyscraper. It might have been christened the Fox Plaza, but you'll recognise it instantly as Nakatomi Tower, where Bruce Willis swung from lift cables in his bare feet for the awesome *Die Hard*. LA Bike Tours cost $45 (lunch and cycle hire included). Book online for a 20 percent discount. Yippee-ki-yay!

Lanzarote

www.lanzarote-villas.com ★★★

'Lanzarote, land of barren moon-scape and luxury development,' claims this comprehensive site – two criteria that have appealed to many a sci-fi film-maker. Which is why, as you wander over the



Glastonbury's 'skiffle tent' drew few punters

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Us.

When would you like to fly? Unlike the competition we don't just deal with the next couple of weeks. We're taking bookings now for the rest of the year.

Where would you like to fly to? We don't just fly to the "top ten" destinations or major hubs. On our website you'll find every major airport listed from Anchorage to Zanzibar.

Which airline do you prefer? Unlike our competitors we offer tickets for all the major carriers and most of the smaller ones as well.

How much would you like to pay? Our Bid & Go service allows you to state your preferred price for a seat which we will then negotiate with the airline on your behalf.

Are you concerned about making a purchase over the internet? We are a licensee of the Trust security network which guarantees secure encryption of all your details from the moment you log on to our website.

Does it matter to you if the agent you book through is full bonded by ABTA, LATA, ATOL, ASTA and PATA? Needless to say, we are.

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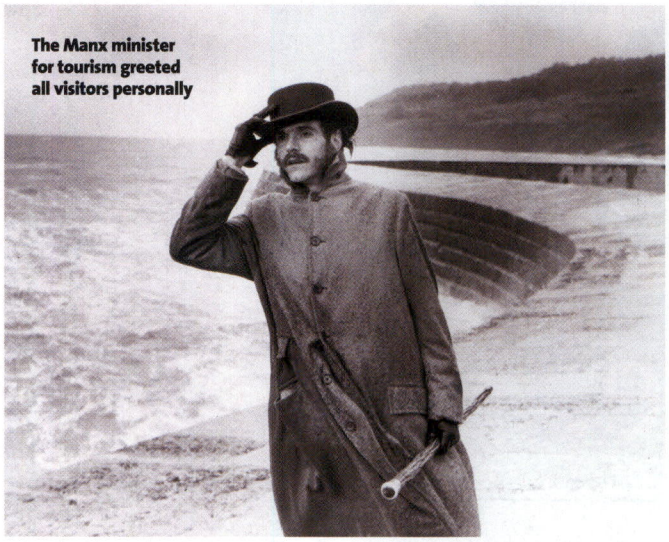

The Manx minister for tourism greeted all visitors personally

island's volcanic landscape, you'll recognise locations from movies as diverse as *Enemy Mine* to *One Million Years BC*. Then retreat to the comfort of your luxury villa, rented for as little as £100 per person per week, to pick shards of pumice from your long-suffering feet.

Lyme Regis

www.amherst lodge.com ★★★★

This sleepy Dorset resort didn't know what had hit it when Hollywood rolled into town in 1984 to shoot *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Simple fisherfolk setting out for a day's crabbing would sail past Jeremy Irons with a faceful of whiskers, or Meryl Streep on the groyne, staring wistfully out to sea. Fancy a taste of Dorset spume yourself? Then book a self-catering holiday online at Amherst Lodge, a country house near Uplyme. Remember to take a cloak.

Prater Amusement Park

www.vienna-guide-service.com

★★★

'Look down there, Holly. Would you really feel any pity if one of those dots stopped moving – forever?' How many times have the hapless staff at Vienna's famous Ferris wheel heard that speech? Harry Lime fans can book a guided tour to the city of *The Third Man* at this site, fly out on the cheap via ***www.buzzaway.com***, and soon be taking in all Vienna has to offer – including Austria's equivalent of the London Eye, Mozart's apartment, the Spanish Riding School, a far-right coalition government...

Seneca Creek State Park, Maryland

10kvacationrentals.com/st.ads/md

★★

'Scenic stream valley... trails wind through a variety of habitats typical of central Maryland...' Not a single mention of disappearing students and horrific goings-on at the park's site at ***www.dnr.state.md.us*** – which is strange, because these are the woods where *The Blair Witch Project* was shot. Holiday at a waterfront property on Chesapeake Bay found through 10kvacationrentals and you're but a short boat ride from those spooky trees. Don't forget to pack the camcorder.

STAND-INS

'MORE PALM TREES, MR K?'

What's a director to do when he doesn't like flying, lives in Borehamwood and is making a Vietnam War movie? Film it in London's Docklands, of course. Yes, Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* recreated the holy city of Hue in Beckton Gas Works. Strangely enough, East London has failed to take off among Hollywood producers, but if there's one place they do like it's Vancouver. The Internet Movie Database lists an astonishing 499 movies filmed there – most of them supposedly set in New York. Tax breaks, friendly cops and plenty of big buildings means the Canadian metropolis often masquerades as the Big Apple – so anal-retentive film buffs with a taste for maple syrup can enjoy the holiday of a lifetime.

www.vancouver-bc.com

Vancouver: chameleon-like

WORDS: MATTHEW BINGHAM; PICTURES: KOBAL COLLECTION, MOVIESTORE, WORLD PICTURES

best travel sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE BEST HOLIDAY AND FLIGHT DEALS?

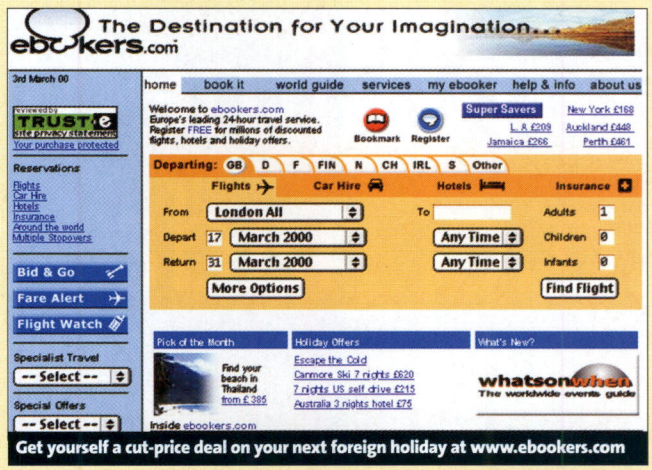
expedia.co.uk
Microsoft's flights and holidays site.
www.azbtravel.co.uk
Britain's biggest online travel agent.
www.ebookers.com
Award-winning travel finder.

GET DESTINATION INFO?

www.t-e.co.uk
A great resource for travelogues, advice and guides.
www.roughguides.com
From the publishers of the guides.
www.lonelyplanet.com
Everything you'd expect from this, the travel guide people.

SPEND A DAY OUT IN BRITAIN?

www.LondonTown.com/index2.html
Discover everything there is to do and see in the Big Smoke without leaving your desk.
www.virgin.net/daysout
Great ideas and tips for days out throughout the UK from those helpful people at Virgin.
www.knowhere.co.uk
A brutally honest guide to the backwaters of Britain.
www.britainexpress.com
A jam-packed UK travel and heritage guide. Where to go and lots of background info and articles on where you're going.



Get yourself a cut-price deal on your next foreign holiday at www.ebookers.com

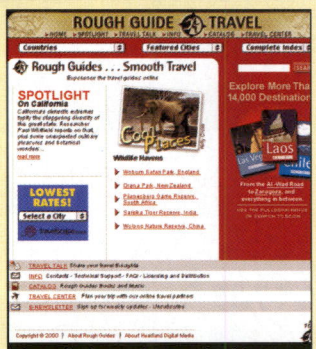
www.utravel.co.uk
Features a dead handy destination information guide, as well as travel news and special offers.

GET DOS AND DON'TS?

www.etravel.org
A neat and tidy online travel mag, with plenty of great tips.
www.tips4trips.com
1,000 handy 'tips for trips', categorised for easy access.
www.fco.gov.uk/travel
Get the official word on countries before setting off – maybe you shouldn't even be going there...
www.travel-news.org
Good source of independent travel news for British travellers.

FIND ACCOMMODATION

www.placestostay.com
Whether it's the Bahamas or Bangkok, this should find you a suitable place to rest.
www.cottage-net.ndirect.co.uk
Fancy an away-from-it-all country cottage? Then try this huge self-catering database.
www.smoothhound.co.uk
Find a comfy home from home with this guide to B&Bs and hotels across the whole of the UK.



The going's good at roughguides.com

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.travel.air
Always on a plane? Swap airline tales and fare details here.

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Find out how to travel the world for next to nothing as a courier by joining up with this lot.

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www.travelchannel.com
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TN01

'Do you want fries with that?'

RESTAURANTS Don't trawl the phone book for a decent local eatery – let the Web do the walking

AA's Where to Eat

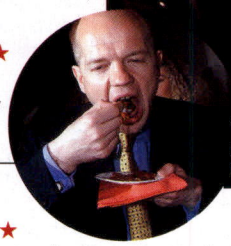
www.automobileassociation.co.uk/hotels/index.asp ★★★★

A dirty yellow may well be the AA's signature colour, but to use it on a Web page for restaurant listings might have been a mistake – all it does is conjure up the image of being violently ill. That aside, this is an impressive site, with each category divided into sections and price brackets. And for those who don't have the honour of living within the M25, it also lists places outside London. Check it out – but not if you're feeling delicate.

Curryhouse.net

www.curryhouse.net ★★★★

The Web site equivalent of your favourite Indian: simply laid out with a good menu.



'The chef's special tonight is Corgi'

To find the curry restaurant of your dreams – or even a half-way decent one – simply select your county and town and a list of eating places appears. The 'Information' button gives further details, although sometimes this can be less than illuminating – the Akbar Tandoori restaurant is detailed as being a, unsurprisingly, a 'Tandoori' – but it's still an essential guide for when nothing but a madras and five pints of lager will do.

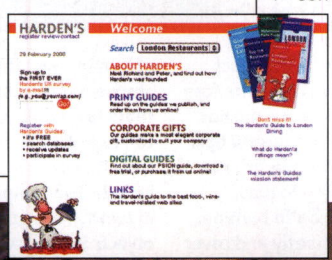
Meg readied another grape pip for launch

Harden's

www.hardens.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Launched by two brothers, the Harden's restaurant guides have but one aim: 'To tell it how it is.' You can't say fairer than that. The guides rely on you, the punter, sending in your thoughts on dining establishments – so each review includes a broad cross-section of input. Good to look at and easy to use (via quick registration), it lists restaurants in price ranges; in the less than £5 section there were, intriguingly, some that said '£0'. See you there.



Stampede or no stampede, the Pings were finishing their meal

best food sites ★★★★★

where can I...

BUY WINE ONLINE?

www.madaboutwine.com
User-friendly beginners' guide and shop. Also features auctions.

www.winescape.co.uk
Wines of the world at affordable prices. Well-established online.

GET THE LATEST FOOD NEWS?

www.foodchannel.com
Get all the lowdown on new tastes, and find yourself an eatery.

www.winedine.co.uk
Ezine focusing on food, drink and travel features.

BUY INGREDIENTS ONLINE?

www.tesco.co.uk/indexn.htm
The most innovative of the big online supermarkets, offering 'aisle cruising' and extra Clubcard points.

www.Groceries.org.uk
Finds the best and cheapest food for you, then has it delivered to your door. Perfect!

FIND RECIPES ONLINE?

www.mealsforyou.com
A huge database of tasty recipes, fully searchable and interactive with it.

www.cbyc.com
Exotic recipes, plus a messageboard to post your own.

LEARN ABOUT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD?

www.greenpeace.org/~geneng
Learn how you can avoid genetic foods, and where to protest...

www.foodbiotech.org
...then take a look at the opposite side of the argument.

Need a bottle? Check out all your options at new site madaboutwine.com

CURE MY HANGOVER?

www.TheVirtualBar.com
Some useful cures, plus a drinking glossary and bar tricks.

www.wrecked.co.uk
Just one look at this drinking prevention page and you'll never touch a drop again.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.food
Anything and everything to do with the big wide world of food. Take a look at ***alt.food.low-fat*** for a fat-free version.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

To join the recipes list, send an email with 'subscribe recipes' in the message to ***majordomo@listserv.prodigy.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.fareshare.net
Exchange your tried and tested favourite recipes by participating in the chat rooms.

ETIQUETTE

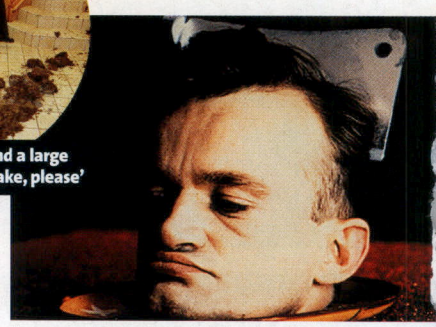
TABLE MANNERS

You've found a great restaurant, you've cracked the dress code... but are you fit to eat in public? If you're at all worried about your table manners, get down to *www.etiquette-network.com* and let Robin Thomson refresh you on the do's and don'ts of fine dining.

Don't let the fact that Robin is American put you off – she has some very useful tips. For example: 'It's not amusing to draw attention to burping. Burp quietly and cover your mouth. Say, "Excuse me"!' (Some at *the net* disagreed, being of the opinion that the whole point of burping *was* the amusement factor, but that's just what you can expect here quite frankly.) Other topics include 'Food trapped in teeth', 'Foreign objects in food' and 'Buttering rolls'. Then, if you're still a clutz at the table after all that, sign up for the Charm School. Excellent.

'I see Sir has come straight from the owl sanctuary...'

'And a large shake, please'



Edinburgh Dining Guide

www.spidacom.co.uk/EDG ★★★
Although nowhere near your Michelin guides in terms of critical assessment (a phone call seems to be all that's required for inclusion) this is still a handy reference to Edinburgh's eating establishments. Pictures are provided, but these all too often reveal an excess of peach paint and linen tablecloths (which may put off some sensitive souls).

Evening Standard

www.thisislondon.co.uk/html/food/eatout/top_direct.html ★★★★
Despite being a London-centric site it's still worth a look for news on the eatery circuit. In addition to pub guides and a listing of the top 100 restaurants, it has reviews from the paper – including those by the doyenne of food critics, Fay Maschler. It's easy to navigate, and that most taxing question – what to wear – is answered; for one trendy establishment the dress code is described as 'fashionable and expensive black'. What more do you need to know?

Jamie's pan fended off the Apache attack

Fodors

www.fodors.com/ri.cgi ★★★★
If you fancy going to a British restaurant outside London, tough – you'll just have to starve, as nothing outside the metropolis is recognised. But if the US is where your appetite lies you're in luck, as every major city is listed. That aside, this is a thorough and easily navigable site from a highly respected guide.

Graham Tigg

www.cix.co.uk/~gtigg ★★★
A solitary venture, this, as opposed to a large foodie group's opinions – sort of a 'One Man and his Plate'. But, as Mr Tigg points out, this does have the advantage of a more consistent perspective on the various gourmet delights he samples. Basically, this is just an online diary of his musings on various restaurants.

London Food

www.london-food.com ★★
'A down to earth review of all types of London restaurant' it provlaims on the home page, and that's what you get. This site provides a basic run-down ofgastronomic London courtesy of lengthy, bite-by-bite accounts of meals. Diners can also get their own back via 'readers' recommendations' – a thinly disguised bitch-fest on eateries that have let them down. Ms Maschler – your job's safe.

Time Out

www.timeout.co.uk/london ★★★★
For perhaps the best guide to London, *Time Out* is the place to look. The site gives various options for places to eat – pubs, or cafes for indulgent patisseries. It benefits from weekly updates and varying price ranges are catered for, so if you can only afford, ooh, a slap-up meal of beans on toast, this will locate a decent place.

Top Table

www.toptable.co.uk ★★★★
This is the Prada slingbacks of restaurant guides. Can't decide between The Ivy and Le Caprice? Let it 'provide inspiration' – and it even books the table. Stylishly laid out, it proudly flags its 'book the unbookables' section at popular restaurants – so log on and join the beautiful people, sweetie.

WORDS: CLAIRE MCHATTIE; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE, PA

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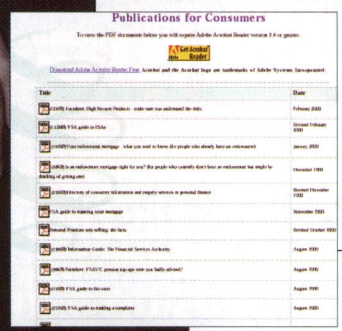
FSA Guide to Financial Advice

www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/pibooklets.htm ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

If don't want to hand over a fistful of dollars to a financial cowboy make sure you read this no-nonsense guide to personal financial advice. Published by the Government body which is taking over regulation of independent financial advisors from the Personal Investment Authority, the free *Guide to Financial Advice* can be downloaded in Acrobat format from this page – with details of everything you need to know about choosing the right kind of advisor – and, more importantly, avoiding the wrong kind.



Don't blow it!

FINANCIAL ADVICE If you're worried you're going to lose your fortune, find an online financial advisor

IFA Direct

www.ifadirect.co.uk ★★★

A very smart site which claims to save you money on financial products. The best thing about the new breed of cyber IFAs is that you'll never have to have them in your living room convincing you there's a good chance you'll die in an horrific car crash next week, and you really *must* buy the latest life assurance. But this site still says to plan for a rainy day... or, better yet, a hurricane.

Independent Advice

www.independent-advice.co.uk ★★★

Find an independent financial advisor who'll save you time by doing business over the Internet. Independent Advice Ltd have a directory of online IFAs with links to their Web sites. There is also some basic personal investment advice and a jargon-busters page that contains an A-Z guide to every conceivable type of insurance. After all, why blow all that money every weekend raving when you can put it away until you're too decrepit to enjoy it?

'When will we be famous?'

Blandford: profligate

Interactive IFA

www.ifa.co.uk ★★★★

If you think the other sites on this page don't go into enough mind-numbing detail, then you're probably a financial advisor – and this is the site for you. Join the 6,500 IFAs who've already registered and swap funny stories with the only people who'll laugh at them; share tips with like-minded users; and tap into a vast range of resources. Plus it's 'interactive' – and interactivity is the new 'black'.

Money Extra

www.moneyextra.co.uk/main.asp ★★★★

Microsoft Money's extensive personal finance site includes a handy cut-out-and-paste guide to IFAs – who they are, what they do, and why you need one now. There's also a very useful IFA search engine to help you find a friendly advisor near you, including those who are happy to work via email – saving you time and money.

best money sites ★★★★★ where can I...

LEARN ABOUT INVESTING?

www.mrscohen.com
Bernice Cohen on investing money.
www.fool.co.uk
Advice for the learner investor.
www.armchairmillionaire.com
Guide to making a million.

GET FINANCIAL ANALYSIS?

www.invweek.co.uk
From *Investment Week*.
www.economist.com
150 years of sagacity online.
www.hemscott.com
Get access to a veritable mine of analysis.

GET MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES?

www.ft.com
This is the mother of all money sites.
www.bloomberg.co.uk
The latest, up-to-date data for professionals.
www.ukinvest.com
News and real-time quotes.

TRADE SHARES?

www.stocktrade.co.uk
Dealers in UK stocks.
www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk
Site offering real-time dealing and advice.
www.forex-cmc.co.uk
First online foreign-exchange dealer.

SORT OUT MY FINANCES?

www.thisismoney.com
Online personal finance adviser, there to help you with your cash problems.
www.iii.co.uk
Advice for individual investors.
www.moneyunlimited.co.uk
Financial advice, portfolio building and a resource guide.

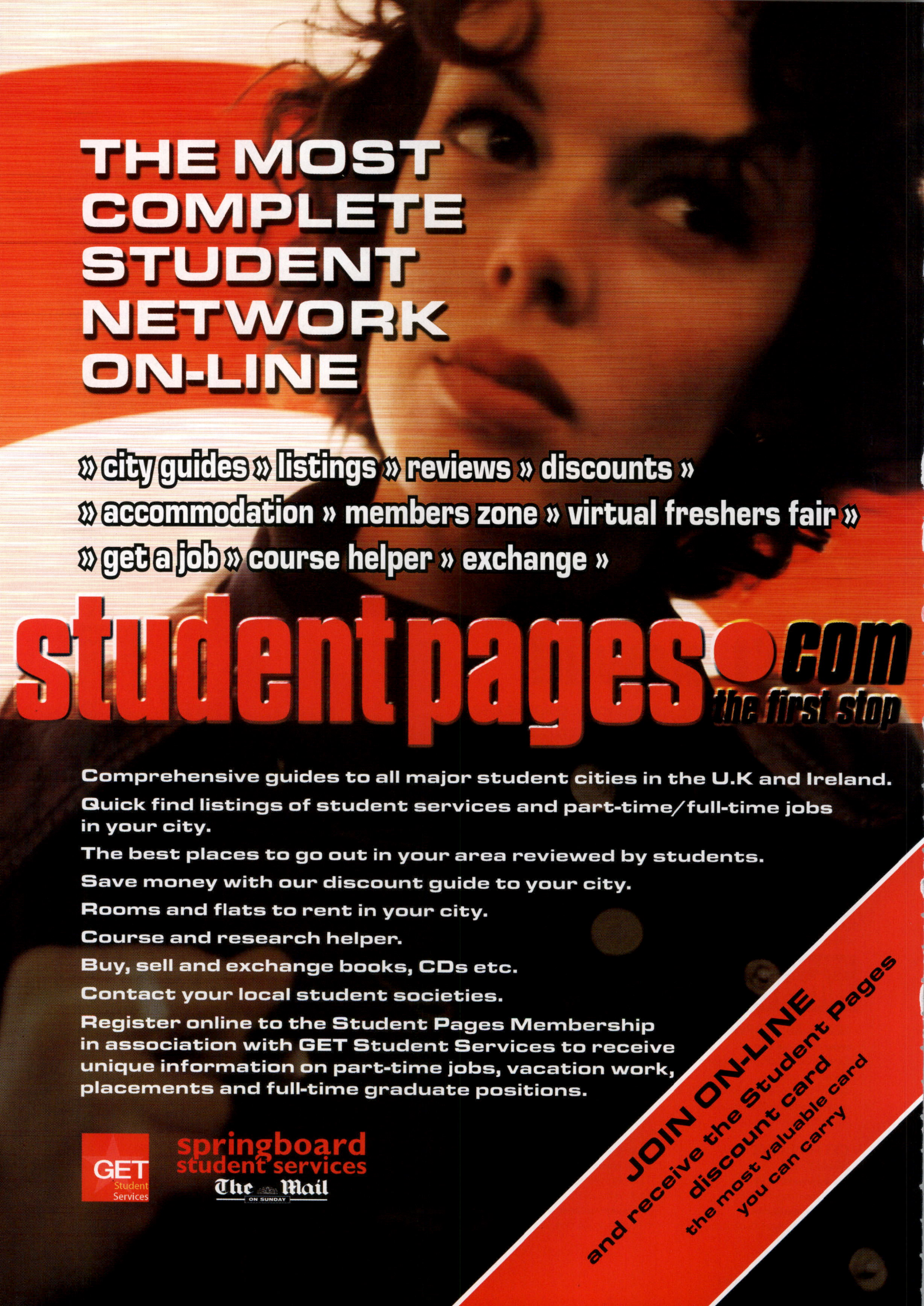
FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.finance
Discussion and advice on a whole variety of topics, including tax.

GET CHATTING?

investor.msn.com
Join in the Microsoft money fun.

WORDS: CHRIS HADLEY; PICTURES: RETNA, PA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the first stop
Comprehensive guides to all major student cities in the U.K and Ireland.
Quick find listings of student services and part-time/full-time jobs in your city.
The best places to go out in your area reviewed by students.
Save money with our discount guide to your city.
Rooms and flats to rent in your city.
Course and research helper.
Buy, sell and exchange books, CDs etc.
Contact your local student societies.
Register online to the Student Pages Membership in association with GET Student Services to receive unique information on part-time jobs, vacation work, placements and full-time graduate positions.
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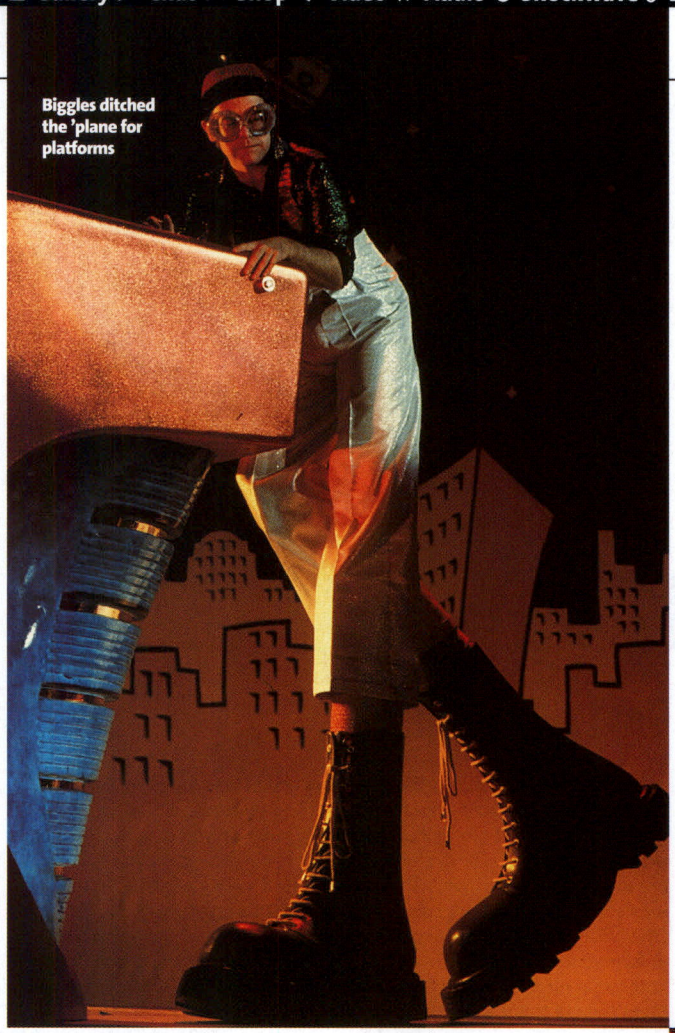
springboard student services
The Mail on Sunday
JOIN ON-LINE and receive the Student Pages discount card the most valuable card you can carry


Biggles ditched the 'plane for platforms

'Good choice, Mrs Marcos'

SHOES You can tell a lot from a person's shoes – and there's enough here to keep Freud busy for a year

Clarks

www.clarks.co.uk ★★★

Clarks are a British institution, making quality tootsie protection for generations both past and present. Their Web site is a typically dull-but-functional site, with information on how to care for your shoes and a brief section on how to deal with fitting problems and, erm, swelling feet. Best of all, there's an online shoe-size measurer which, much to *the net*'s disappointment, doesn't involve plonking your foot on the computer screen. Shame.

Florsheim Shoes

www.florsheim.com ★★★

American shoe manufacturers Florsheim might make some beautiful shoes (many styles of which can be viewed here), but the fashion advice offered on the site isn't much cop. 'Can I wear boat shoes on office casuals?' begs one punter. 'Yes, so long as they haven't seen too much sea salt!' comes back the enthusiastic reply. Worth a visit for the opportunity to email a podiatrist with a foot query, though.

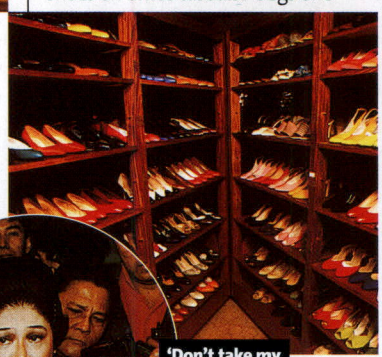
The lead boots trick always got laughs

Charlie's Sneaker Pages

www.sneakers.pair.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Most normal people wear their trainers to death before ceremoniously dumping them in the bin. Not Charlie – he collects them, photographs them and places the pics on his Web site, along with explanations of every 'sneaker'-related term you could think of. It's frighteningly thorough, and as such is the best place to read about all the different types of these posh plimsoles (including the interestingly named fishheads and felony shoes), as well as discover how those annoying ones with lights in the heel actually worked.



'Don't take my babies away'

Platform Diva

www.geocities.com/FashionAvenue/1495 ★★★

Platform shoes have been around for donkey's years and will still be worn when the Spice Girls have split – so join Platform Diva and worship their existence here. It's amazing how many different styles of platform shoe there actually are: even Geri Halliwell might balk at some of the '70s pairs. And things get still more odd in the fetish section...

Shoes on the Net

www.shoesonthenet.com ★★★

It might speak with a Yank accent, but Shoes on the Net represents a pretty good collection of links (including international ones) for the shoe-seeker – even those after vintage footwear will find themselves moved gently in the right direction. Exactly what is discussed in the Shoe Chat Room is anyone's guess, however – unsurprisingly, it was completely empty when we visited.

The new Adidas Beckham boot

best fashion sites ★★★★★ where can I...

BUY CLOTHES ONLINE?

www.tops.co.uk
Get all the latest goodies from Top Shop and Top Man stores without having to venture out onto the High Street.

www.boo.com
The online clothing superstore.

FIND THE LATEST FASHION NEWS?

www.fashion-icon.com
Ranging from street style to interiors, this site is up to date with the latest trends.

www.fbia.com
The Fashion and Beauty Internet Association's hub of fashion info.

SEE THE LATEST FASHION SHOWS?

www.firstview.com/home.html
Thousands of pics from the latest collections from the catwalk.

www.fashion.net/shows/
View videos of all the latest fashion shows as they roll off the catwalk.

READ FASHION DO'S AND DON'TS?

www.manslife.com/clothes
If you think men's fashion is an oxymoron, visit soon.

www.beautynet.com
Having a bad hair day? Run out of ideas for improvement? Drop by this no-frills site for advice.

GET AN ONLINE MAKEOVER?

www.compucloz.com
Try one for free online. Hours of fun.

www.makemeover.com
Change your style using a photo.

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

alt.fashion
Plenty of shoe chat, plus general fashion tips and gossip.

GET CHATTING?

www.beautybuzz.com
Can't decide on your make-up first thing? Then discuss it here as soon as you rise and shine.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: REX, SIPA PRESS

'And it's the emu by a neck'

RUNNING The London Marathon is just round the corner – so let the Web prepare you for the big day

The final miles took their toll on Limahl

Asimba

www.asimba.net ★★★★

Do you want to transform yourself from sofa surfer into a triumph of the track? Then pick a training regime at Asimba for all fitness levels and all types of sport. The site will even design a programme for you – just plug in your fitness level, the sport you want to champion and the date you want to start (shame it can't help you stick to it). Then check out the 'fitness clinic' where you can send your worries to an online trainer, who will post a solution for you within a week.

Dead Runner's Society

Storm.cadcam.iupui.edu/drs/drs.html ★★

Rather talk about running than do it? Then hang out at here. 'We discuss everything from meditation to marathons,' it claims. While the site might be a little *too* wordy for some, it does list a huge range of running holidays: how about three weeks spent jogging across the mountains of Peru? And you can even keep an online log of your daily running tally to compare with your fellow madmen.

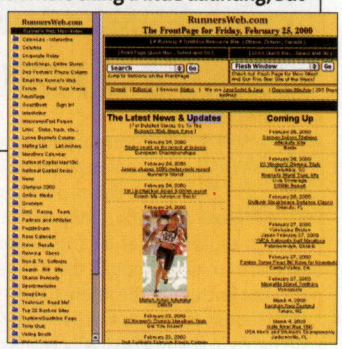
That'll be floating like a butterfly, then

Runner's Web

www.runnersweb.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Running can be a very lonely business, especially if you're pounding the road over long distances, so it's great to feel part of a global community in which you can swap PB (personal best) stories. And this is the site – complete with hundreds of links – to do it on. It's very news-based, with loads of stories about professional athletes to inspire you as you slog through puddles and mud. The front page changes daily, so news really is news, and there's buckets of information on events taking place all over the world. Beginners with no interest in running will probably find the whole thing a little daunting, but those whose trainers are already worn in will love it. There's even a fabulous swapshop where you can advertise for free (and no, we don't want your old size-nine Nikes).



Flora London Marathon

www.london-marathon.co.uk ★★★★

This site is a must if you're going to be in the starting line-up on 16th April with all the regulars: folk dressed as poultry, ex-DJs, old codgers... Plenty of advice on injuries, training schedules and diet, plus a shop where you can choose from a small selection of trainers and clothes. There's also a course map, accommodation guide and best-view tips for spectators. You'll even find a Countdown Clock, which invokes the same fear in the London marathon-runner as millennium clocks did for IT types.

New York Road Runners Club

www.nyrrc.org ★★★

OK, so you probably don't live in the Big Apple, but this site is still a mine of information. Classes and clinics

best health sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET AN ONLINE DIAGNOSIS?

www.intelihealth.com
A full and frank site that will help you solve your problems.
www.mayo.edu
Confess your fears to the resident doctor and have them put to rest.
www.quackwatch.com
Suspicious of convention? This site shows how to heal 'naturally'.
www.pathfinder.com/drweil
The most celebrated online doctor answers your health worries.

FIND A HEALTH INFO SITE?

www.planetmedica.co.uk
Info on common conditions and treatment on this health portal.
www.netdoctor.co.uk
Vast resource of medical info, plus links to support groups and chat.
www.surgerydoor.co.uk
Featuring the lovely Dr Mark Porter.
www.patient.co.uk
An online medical reference book.

FIND OUT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

www.thebabyregistry.co.uk
Advice, contacts and articles for those with a bun in the oven.
www.ukmums.co.uk
For mums and dads – everything about bringing up baby.
www.babycenter.com
Mass of resources for mums-to-be.
www.pregnancyguideonline.com
Find out what's happening with the week-by-week guide.

FIND AN OFFICIAL HEALTH SITE?

www.doh.gov.uk/nhsexec/direct.htm/
How to get help via NHS Direct.

Healthy requisites at healthshop.com

www.bma.org.uk
Info on how to become a doctor.
www.dentalhealth.org.uk
Dentistry queries answered online.
www.bupa.co.uk
Get some private healthcare.

TRY AN ALTERNATIVE?

www.thinknatural.com
For your remedies and beauty aids.
www.altguide.com
Find an alternative therapist, or check out the books on offer.
www.homeopathyhome.com
A search engine, a library, chats, an education section and enticing ads.
www.healthshop.com
Health foods and supplies to buy.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.running
Get support before you face the London Marathon.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the Be Healthy list from ***www.maiasworld.com/health/health.com*** and learn how to live a happier, fuller life.

GET CHATTING?

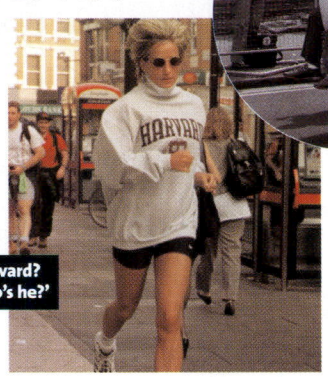
www.healthboards.com
Discuss general health and specific medical conditions.

Looking for more Health sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

feature a range of topics, from active-isolated stretching (the best thing since training shoes, say some) to deep-water running – whatever that is. Annoyingly, the 'ask the coach' section is out-of-bounds for non-members. However, if you fancy your chances at beating the Yanks in their own race on November 5th, find out more here.

'Oh, curse these photographers'

Emu kept busy after Hull left us


'Harvard? Who's he?'

Nuff Respect

www.nuff-respect.co.uk
★★★★

Many of you will be delighted to hear that our bodies weren't designed to be running machines. And if you're the sort that's happy to watch others build up a sweat while you sit back, this site's for you. You can view plenty of pictures of Linford types giving it their all and there's lots of gen on international track stars. You won't find any information on running itself (phew, that's a relief), but it'll keep you abreast of major world running events. Shopping for trainers to pose in is possible, too.

The Runner's Edge

www.tre.com ★★
Running in any American city, where crime rates seem to be soaring ever-higher, must surely improve your PB. So if you find yourself training in Chicago, The Runner's Edge might just help save your life. Overall though, this site is disappointing – if we say it's only saved by the Police soundtrack you'll get our drift. Begrudging credit has to be given for the extra info you get if you register, and there are tips on how to train for other sports.

Runner's World

www.runnersworld.com ★★★★★
There's a magazine for everyone, and *Runner's World* is the one for cheerful street-pounders everywhere. Like the mag itself, the site has a UK (***www.runnersworld.co.uk***) and US edition, the Stateside version being superior. It's geared to the experienced runner, but has great tips for getting started if you're new to the game. And you might like to dip a toe into its enlightening shoe guide which, under the heading Insole Insight, explains how over-the-counter insoles can give you more miles of comfortable, injury-free running.

State Of The Art Marathon Training

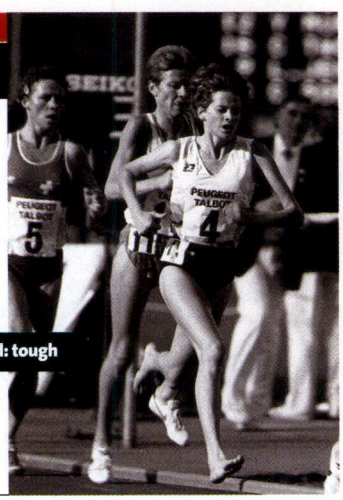
www.geocities.com/yosemite/6004/marathon.html ★★★
'Helpful hints for the first-time marathoner or novice to complete a 26.2 mile race standing upright and smiling!' If you can block out this US site's over-cheery sentiments and live with its 'I've-done-it-so-you-can-too' tone, there's actually quite a lot of information here. It runs the usual gamut of training tips, marathon schedules and race diaries, and the response rate to emailed queries appears to be good. Beginners could do worse than pay it a visit.

HOW TO DO A ZOLA

DITCH THOSE PUMPS!

Do you remember that bit in *Forrest Gump* where one day he set off running and just ran, and ran, and ran? OK, so Forrest grew a beard and became ultra-weird, but at least he wore trainers. The nutters at Barefoot (*barefoot.cecs.csulb.edu/running*) on the other hand never wear running shoes, 'cause apparently they're really bad for you. These boys aren't afraid of broken glass (tip: 'look where you're going'), hookworm infection (tip: 'is that such a bad thing anyway?'), calluses (tip: 'depends what you define as a callus') or being shunned in public, it would appear.

They're all American, they all have beards, they all appear to be men, and aside from avoiding the evil plimsole they all seem to loathe clothing, too. They don't do a great job of persuading you to go unshod: one of their 'barefoot runners in history' is Abraham Lincoln, who could also 'hoot like an owl'.


Budd: tough

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: PA

DON'T JUST E-MAIL, SEE MAIL

'Simulated Screen Image'. Windows 98® and Windows® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Smart Media™ is a trademark of Toshiba Corporation.

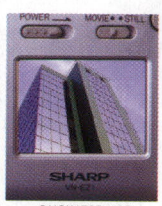
A world first, the Sharp digital VN-EZ1 Internet ViewCam sends moving pictures over the net in a totally new format.

No complicated procedures, no massive files that take forever to transmit and download.

Using the revolutionary MPEG-4, a new moving picture compression standard, all file sizes are drastically reduced.

LEISURE USE

Making it easy to attach video to all your e-mails, whether they are for family or business usage.


BUSINESS USE

They can easily be viewed, too, by using the Windows® Media Viewer in Windows 98® and Internet Explorer 5.

Open your eyes now to the more exciting possibilities in e-mail, with Sharp.

For more information, including nearest stockist, ring Freefone 0800-262958. Visit our corporate website at www.Sharp-world.com

Use Sharp Internet ViewCam to shoot up to 60 mins of video plus audio on to 32MB Smart Media™ card

Slot neat little Smart Media™ Memory card into the supplied floppy disc adaptor

PixLab software included to help prepare your moving picture files

Send video as e-mail attachment, MPEG-4 drastically reducing file size

Video can be quickly and easily viewed on Windows® Media Player

WIDE SCREEN TV

LCD VIDEO PROJECTOR

DVD

VCR

VIEWCAM

PERSONAL MINIDISC

MINIDISC SYSTEM

SHARP digital

Fins can only get better

FISHKEEPING Tips to help your aquatic pals thrive

The fish loved their actor tank

Amazing Fish Cam

fishcam.netscape.com/fishcam ★★★

Too lazy to get yourself a tank? Then watch someone else's. Fish Cam – once described by *The Economist* as 'utterly useless' – points directly into a tropical aquarium featuring a number of colourful species. And if the continuous submarine action and five-minute highlight clips don't hit the spot, check out the Jive Bunny-style speeded-up megamix of recent 'events' and watch the little blighters swim like their tails are on fire.

Remember – the right size tank is important

Aquaria Central

www.aquariacentral.com ★★★★★

thenet AWARD

Fishkeeping's a solitary business at the best of times, but don't despair – there are literally thousands of like-minded individuals gathered here at the Net's biggest and best aquarium community. More than 3,000 of them were posting as part of a debate on aquatic plants when we visited, so clearly no subject's trivial. There's a thriving chat room too, helpful articles, tips and links and, best of all, a massive archive of fishy images to pore over – look at their sweet little faces! Aahhh...

Aquatics Warehouse

www.aquatics-warehouse.co.uk

★★★★

Just about the only UK store for marine and tropical supplies, there's quite a range, including cleaning equipment, books, filters and gadgets for all manner of fishkeepers. Sadly, no-one this side of the Atlantic is yet offering to mail live fish, probably due to the likelihood of death *en route* – not great for kiddies' birthdays.

eFish Tank

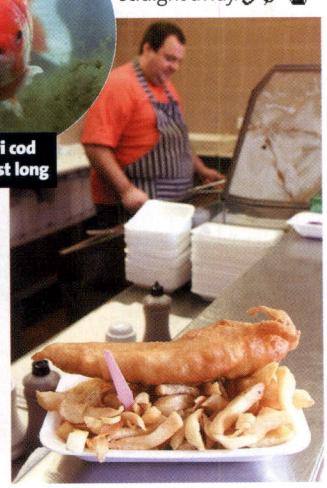
www.efishtank.com ★★★★★

'What can the Web do for me as a fishkeeper?' Good question – and here's the answer. The eFish Tank is a collection of resources fish fans will love. Need to calculate the quantity of chemicals to use in your tank? Look no further. Want to keep a record of the fish you've bred (or killed)? No problem. Best of all, the email service will tell you when to perform necessary tasks, and none of it costs a penny. Genius.

Fish Index

www.fishindex.com ★★★★

One of the best fish portals, Fish Index offers articles, photos and a forum on any aspect of aquaria. Beginners will certainly appreciate the FAQs, tips and messageboards, while the video selection of hot fish action is a must. Make this a bookmark straight away.



Poor Geri cod didn't last long

best animal sites ★★★★★

where can I...

HELP WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS?

www.rspca.org.uk

Official site for the people who care for neglected animals everywhere.

www.animalaid.org.uk

The online home of the UK's largest animal rights group.

LEARN ABOUT MY PET'S BEHAVIOUR?

www.healthypet.com

Although primarily about pet health, there's also plenty of information on behaviour.

www.pethelp.net

A large site that claims to help you understand your pet, be it dog, bird or lizard.

BUY PET SUPPLIES?

www.petplanet.co.uk

Choose a pet to suit your lifestyle, then kit them out with toys.

www.pet-pyjamas.co.uk

Home to some of the weirdest pet merchandise you could hope to find, including beds and clothes.

VISIT ONLINE ZOOS?

www.howletts.net

The latest Webcam technology lets you take a virtual tour round this wildlife park.

www.si.edu/natzoo

An easy-to-use and humorous site that is perfect for kids.

LEARN HOW TO CARE FOR MY PET?

www.avma.org/care4pets

Excellent advice from American vets on how to look after your pet.

www.rabbit.org/faq

A whole heap of rabbit care advice, including diet and toys.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.aquaria.freshwater.misc

The best place to discuss all your tropical fish requirements.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Go to ***lists.aquaria.net/fish*** to get all the latest news and views from the exciting world of tropical fish. And if you're looking to green up your tank, try ***lists.aquaria.net/plants***.

GET CHATTING?

www3.mistral.co.uk/xalan

ICQ chat for British fish-keepers. Also features a useful guide to common diseases.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: PA, KOBAL COLLECTION

The flying toilet roll insert proved a resounding success

For the wings of a dove

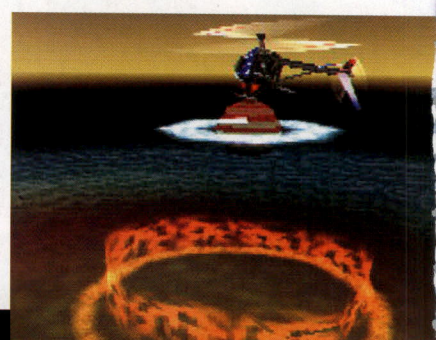
FLIGHT SIMS Wannabe Tom Cruises start here: fly like an eagle with the Web's best virtual wings

Dogfighter.com
www.dogfighter.com ★★★★★
Chocks away, me laddies – cue theme from *442 Squadron*. Welcome to the world of Dogfighter.com, where terra firma is to be avoided at all costs. This site is the spiritual home of the flight sim – especially if it involves causing fellow flyers to crash and burn. Keep up with the latest news, read game reviews and chat to other virtual aviators at this awesome site.

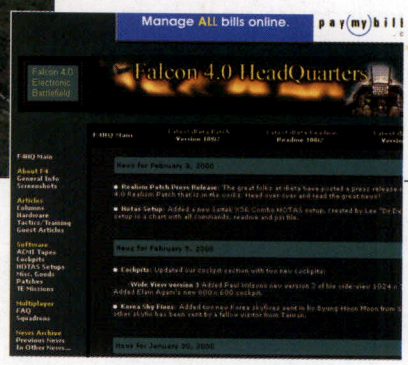
Flanker 2
www.flanker2.com
★★★★
Flanker 2 is a long-awaited sequel to the 1995 classic, and delivers everything the original promised. It's ambitious, difficult, realistic enough to give Gulf War veterans flashbacks, and designed for the frequent flyer rather than part-time pilot. This shrine to the mighty Russian war machine gives you all the basics, as well as allowing you to keep abreast of the new patches that are constantly developed for PC games.

The tragedy of Concorde on acid

Microsoft Flight Simulator (Unofficial Page)
www.simtakeoff.com ★★★★
Microsoft's Flight Simulator is *so* realistic, it's dull. Taking off and landing is exciting, but the interminable real-time six-hour transatlantic flight is simply tedious. And all without the promise of a night of debaucery with a stewardess... If you want realism, then this is the place for you – there are extra planes and airports to download. But if it's excitement you crave, plot a course elsewhere.



Stunt 'Copter
www.stuntcopter.com ★★★★
Helicopters make for vomit-inducing, seat-of-the-pants, thrill-laden flying at the best of times. Add the word 'stunt' to the mix, and you know you're in for an adrenaline rush of near Niagara proportions. So dust off that *Ride of the Valkaries* CD, crank up the engine and wait for the world to start spinning around you in new and interesting directions.



Falcon 4
www.f4hq.com ★★★★★
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD
Falcon 4 has the lot: a lengthy and dynamic Campaign mode, the quick-fire gratification of Instant Action, and the option to create your own missions or battle against other players online. Budding 'Maverick' Mitchells can search for wingmen in the chat room, or even join a Squadron – ideal for a Sunday afternoon's entertainment spent dog-fighting in the clear skies over Korea, followed by tea and crumpets back at the mess. There's also a well-kept news section, and some (allegedly) fascinating articles on tactics.

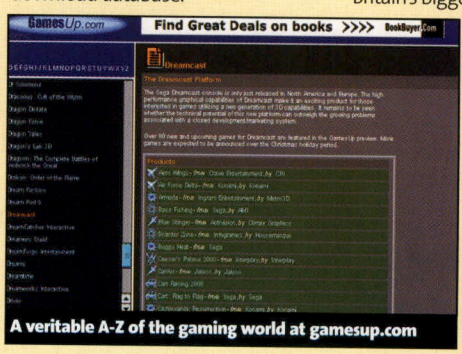
best games sites ★★★★★ where can I...

BUY COMPUTER GAMES?
www.game-retail.co.uk
Up to 10 percent off marked games ordered online here.
www.gamesparadise.com
Top games discounted.

PLAY TRADITIONAL GAMES?
games.yahoo.com
Card games, board games and more.
www.bignetwork.com
A collection of classic gaming tournaments.

FIND GAMING NEWS?
www.gamesdomain.co.uk
News and game-related features.
www.gamedaily.com
All the latest news on this busy site.

FIND DEMOS?
www.happypuppy.com
The place to find the newest demos and shareware games. Includes a download database.



A veritable A-Z of the gaming world at gamesup.com

www.gamesup.com
It looks boring, but it's a feast of links to news, reviews, demos and cheats.

PLAY GAMES ONLINE?
www.shockwave.com
Shocked games and cartoons.
www.gameplay.co.uk
Britain's biggest and best online gaming site.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?
comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.flight-sim
Discuss PC flight sims with fellow pilots.

GET CHATTING?
www.121stVFAS.com
A 'flight combat' discussion group with members who take it all a little bit too seriously.

Looking for more Games sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

WORDS: SHAUN MARIN

It's everything about

cars

Read reviews, keep up-to-date with motoring news, search for a new or used car, get a quote or arrange insurance, check a used vehicle valuation, find a cherished number plate, arrange a vehicle inspection, sort out a hire purchase quote, get help after a road accident and lots more besides...

www.autohit.com

▶▶ www.autosport.com
for.racetrack.enthusiasts
AUTOSPORT
For the motor racing news updated throughout the day, live radio reports and personal e-mail, visit the new Autosport website.

'Turn the papers over now...'

REVISION Think you can breeze through those exams with a 15-minute cram the night before? Think again

A-levels.co.uk

www.a-levels.co.uk ★★★★

Kids – they've never had it so good. What we would have done for a portal that could take us from the Thomas Hardy Online Society to a seemingly infallible US-based arithmetic doctor in just a few clicks. We thoroughly tested the English literature section, which never failed to throw up exhaustive reading lists for just about anybody who's ever penned a yarn in their time.

BBC Bitesize

www.bbc.co.uk/knowledge/bitesizetc/revision.shtml ★★★★

'If you make full and neat notes in class and homework you will find it much easier to re-read them two years later!' advises geography teacher Gary Metcalfe. Well, we know that Gaz, but a fat lot of help it is if your history GCSEs are the next morning. Overall, however, Mr Metcalfe and the other real-life teachers and experts involved in the BBC site do an excellent job of breaking down the mammoth task of revision into bitesize pieces – as the name would suggest. Very good effort.

Saffie: colourblind, by the look of it

Channel 4 Learning

www.4learning.co.uk ★★★

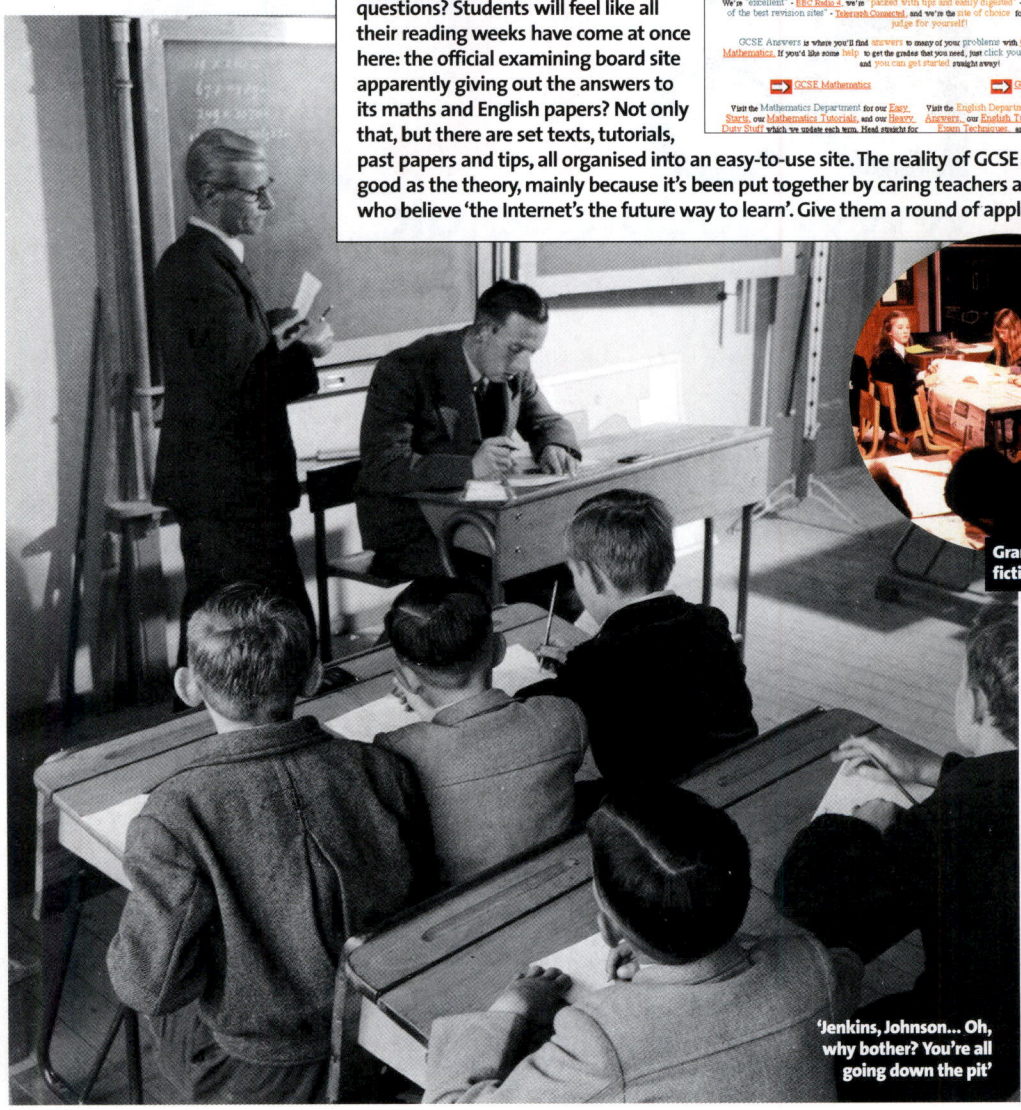
Great for planning your Channel 4 viewing, even if the search engine is more likely to throw up the *English Programme* rather than *Hollyoaks*

GCSE Answers

www.gcse.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'Want GCSE English model answers?' asks this site's home page. Any more stupid questions? Students will feel like all their reading weeks have come at once here: the official examining board site apparently giving out the answers to its maths and English papers? Not only that, but there are set texts, tutorials, past papers and tips, all organised into an easy-to-use site. The reality of GCSE Answers is as good as the theory, mainly because it's been put together by caring teachers and academics who believe 'the Internet's the future way to learn'. Give them a round of applause.



'Jenkins, Johnson... Oh, why bother? You're all going down the pit'

or *South Park*. Meanwhile at Homework High, 'where you are not alone', you can get your questions answered by email. So popular were the chat rooms the week we visited that they'd had to close down – mind you, it was half-term, so we wonder if some of the talk was extra-curricular?

Dr Math

forum.swarthmore.edu/dr.math ★★★

Not the kind of guy you'd go on a night out with, but Dr Math can certainly show you a good time when it comes to golden ratios and Fibonacci sequences. He's US-based so don't expect any direct relevance to the National Curriculum (whose site you can find at ***www.dfee.gov.uk/nc*** incidentally) but, as far as we can see, infinite decimals and imaginary exponents don't change much from continent to continent.

Freeserve

www.freeserve.net/education/examrevision ★★★★

The secret of SAM could hold the key to your exam success – and you can practice it at the Freeserve site. SAM stands for Self Assessment and Marking and is a proven method of computer-supported study. It even allows you to mark your own work from an examiner's point of view (that'll be 10 out of 10 then). It's simple to use and also lets you set up a useful self-assessment tracker.

Grange Hill: fictitious

Kevin's Playroom

www.kevinsplayroom.co.uk ★★★

Once you've got over the fact that the site appears to have been put together by someone called Kevin, this is really very good. Kevin, or whoever, has built a resource of around 600 sites to help with all things educational. Most of the main subjects are covered, plus it's a portal to more general information/educational links, which range from Sting and Trudie's rainforest site to the Docklands Light Railway.

Oxford University Press

www.oup.co.uk/oxed/examsuccess ★★★★

The company that publishes those weighty, dead boring but awfully

THE FASTEST AND EASIEST WAY TO THE
MOST USEFUL AND INTERESTING
WEBSITES ON THE UK INTERNET

The young Winton was easily distracted

best learning sites ★★★★★

where can I...

LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

www.travlang.com
70 languages to learn online.
www.learnplus.com
Spanish and German tuition.
www.bonjour.org.uk
Useful French service for beginners.
www.ipl.org/youth/hello
Learn 30 languages here – absolutely free.

Speak fluent frog – with the help of bonjour.org.uk

LEARN A USEFUL SKILL?

www.how2.com
How to do almost anything.
educationunlimited.co.uk
Impressive on IT in general.
www.premier-pages.co.uk/investor
Become a financial whizz.
www.tmc.ndo.co.uk
Tricks and tips for the magician.

FIND LEARNING RESOURCES?

www.bbc.co.uk/education/lzone
The Beeb's Learning Zone online.
www.topmarks.co.uk
Help with work on 100s of topics.
www.atschool.co.uk
Resources for primary school pupils.
www.bjpinchbeck.com
The famous homework helper.

LEARN AN INSTRUMENT?

www.pianoworld.com
Tickle those ivories like a pro.
www.cyberfret.com
'Online guitar wisdom.'
www.v-zone.com/tpo/Trumpet.html
Blow your own trumpet.
tqd.advanced.org/3656
How instruments work.

LEARN WITHOUT SCHOOL?

www-icdl.open.ac.uk
The good old OU, online.
learning.channel4.com
Home learners aged 4-19.
www.tele-school.org
Get educated online.
www.nec.ac.uk
Help for distance learners.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.uk.a-levels
Don't panic – find support here.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send a message marked 'subscribe PHYS-STU' to ***listserv@uwf.cc.uwf.edu*** to join the Physics Student list.

GET CHATTING?

www.homes-cool.com
Discuss homework with students.

handy schoolbooks is gearing up for a big spring launch which looks well worth a bookmark. As well as offering online ordering, there's going to be exam tips, links, other content, and you'll be able to print out pages from the books themselves – which might just save your life at two in the morning the night before an exam. Also check out the World of Science section at ***www1.oup.co.uk/worldofscience***.

Revise It

www.revise.it
★★★
Not yet fully functional when we visited, but due to be launched before spring. The signs are good, especially since the people behind it – Oxford University bright sparks Nick Rose (19) and Jordan Mayo (18) – aren't long out of the exam room themselves. Guides are written by teachers from Manchester Grammar School – both the boys were pupils there – which regularly tops the GCSE league tables. ℘

Revisions

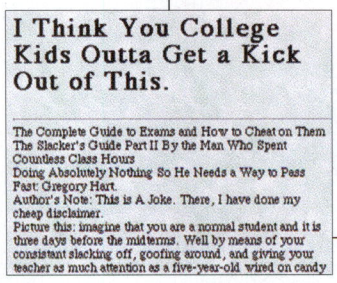
www.revisions.co.uk ★★★
Overall, an interesting set of links and a jolly site. However, we couldn't quite suss out the correlation between the shopping sites – which tell you where you can buy alcohol – and the National Curriculum; while we wouldn't encourage schoolchildren turning to drink during revision, it could be viewed from a 'school of life' perspective. Elsewhere the portal has plenty of useful educational sites, careers advice and links for parents, although overall it's not as exhaustive as it could be. ℘

CHEATING

CUTTING CORNERS

Corkhill: suspect

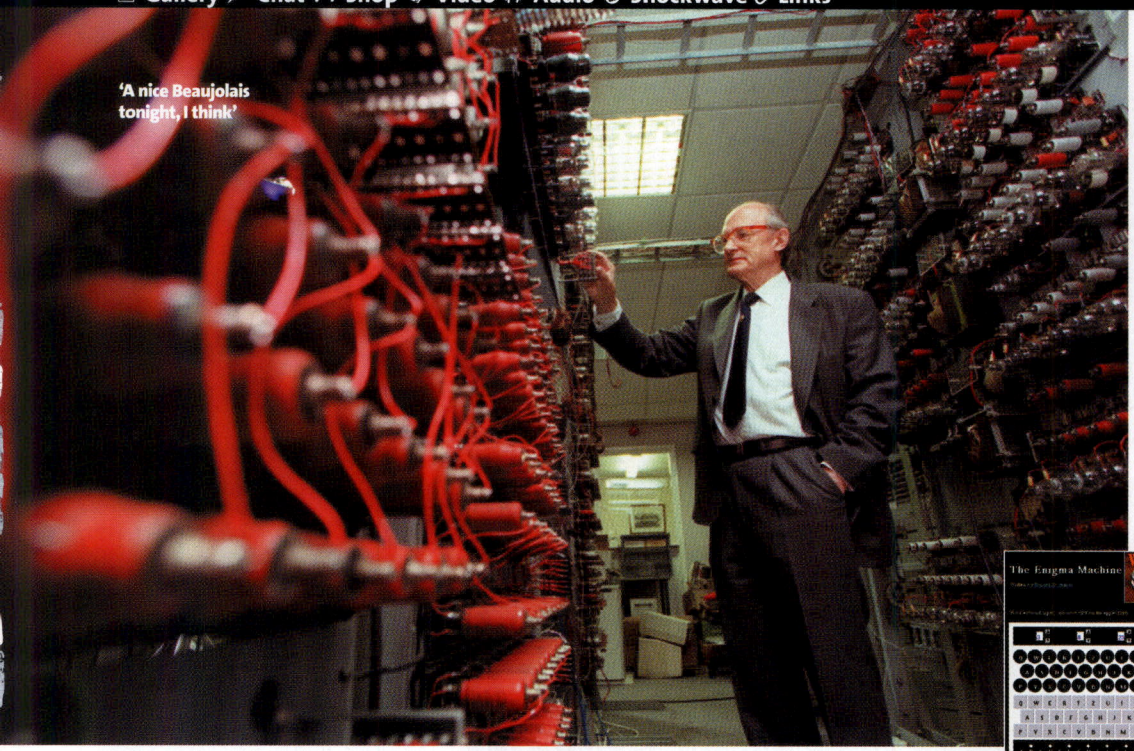
From pseudocheating (shrinking type on a tiny card which you then sneak into the exam) to running the teacher over, you should find a method to suit you at *members.aol.com/thesatool/cheat.html*. We're not sure whether the lawyers would accept Gregory Hart's disclaimer of 'This is a joke' but he clearly feels exonerated: 'Do what so many of our politicians, doctors, lawyers [er, d'you want to retract that Mr Hart?], college students and football players have... cheat.' Greg goes on to suggest everything from buying a paper direct from him (sadly, he's in the US) to digging up your family tree to find a Mafia connection with which to threaten an examiner. If these fail, then claim you've finished your paper early and that you want to sit listening to music on your headphones – really, of course, you've dictated your textbooks onto the tape you're now listening to. This site isn't exactly recommended by the National Curriculum people, but it's a lot more fun.


I Think You College Kids Outta Get a Kick Out of This.

The Complete Guide to Exams and How to Cheat on Them
The Slacker's Guide Part II By the Man Who Spent Countless Class Hours Doing Absolutely Nothing So He Needs a Way to Pass Fast: Gregory Hart.
Author's Note: This is A Joke. There, I have done my cheap disclaimer.
Picture this: imagine that you are a normal student and it is three days before the midterms. Well by means of your consistant slacking off, goofing around, and giving your teacher as much attention as a five-year-old wired on candy

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY, BBC PHOTO LIBRARY, CHANNEL 4

dotmusic.com
click here
if it's music you're after, go straight to no.1
www.dotmusic.com
dotmusic
the insider's guide

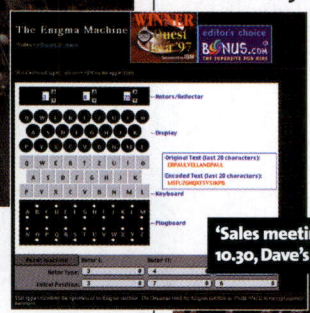

'A nice Beaujolais tonight, I think'

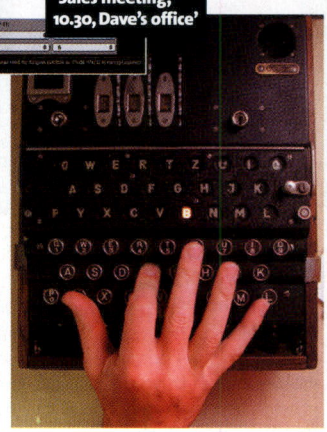
The Enigma Machine

www.ugrad.cs.jhu.edu/~russell/classes/enigma ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Is your middle name 'Von'? Did grandad move to Paraguay in 1945? Do you need an Enigma machine to decode your birthday cards? If you answer yes to all three questions, head over to this site sharpish – Grandpa's probably trying to tell you where he stashed the Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies. In fact, head over there anyway, because this is something special – a fantastic Java simulation of the notorious Enigma, used by the Germans to encrypt messages during World War II.




'Sales meeting, 10.30, Dave's office'

Breaking the waves

CIPHERS Code-breaking won us the war. Now you can have a pop at the things

Classical Cryptography Course

www.fortunecity. com/skyscraper/coding/379/lesson1.htm ★★★★

Volumes one and two of the *Classical Cryptography Course* by the former president of the American Cryptography Association, Randy Nicholls, codename 'Lanaki'. Learn how to crack some of the world's most famous ciphers, from Caesar's personal code to Enigma itself.

The Code Book Cipher Challenge

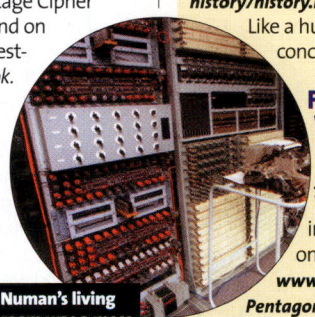
www.4thestate.co.uk/cipherchallenge ★★★★

Fancy winning £10,000? If you've studied the other links on this page closely, especially Lanaki's guide, you'll be well placed to pit your wits against thousands of other expert and would-be cryptographers in Simon Singh's ten-stage Cipher Challenge, to be found on the Website of his best-selling *The Code Book*. As *the net* goes to press, the last two codes are unsolved.

National Cryptologic Museum

www.nsa.gov:8080/museum/tour.html ★★★★

The story of code-making and code-breaking through the ages, courtesy of the spooks at the US National Security Agency. Be sure to read all about MI-8, also known as 'The Black Chamber', headed by Herbert O'Yardley, who famously put his brilliant mathematical mind to good use at the card table. He also wrote *The Education of a Poker Player* – a book still beloved of card-players and spies everywhere.


Numan's living room was a mess

Station X

www.bletchley park.org.uk ★★★

Now the focus of umpteen books and TV programmes, it's easy to forget that the existence of Station X at Bletchley Park during WWII was once one of Britain's most closely-guarded secrets. The homepage of the new Bletchley Park museum includes a brief history of the operation that ultimately cracked both the German army and navy codes, and, even more impressively, was responsible for the world's first computer complex. And be sure to follow the link to The Imperial War Museum's online exhibition.

best history sites ★★★★★ where can I...

RESEARCH BRITISH HISTORY?

www.thehistorychannel.co.uk

Resource guide and forum for British history.

www.great-britain.co.uk/history/history.htm

Like a huge textbook online; concise but fun.

FIND OUT ABOUT WWII?

britaininworldwar2.future.easyspace.com

Well-written, informative nuggets on the 1939-45 conflict.

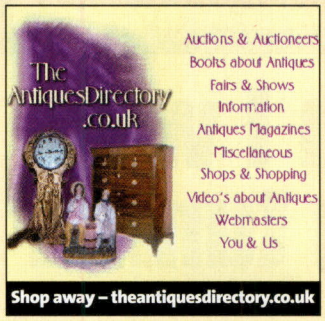
www.geocities.com/Pentagon/4143

The Battle of Britain explored.

VISIT AN ONLINE MUSEUM?

www.nhm.ac.uk

The Natural History Museum site, with masses of information.



Shop away – theantiquesdirectory.co.uk

www.museums.co.uk

Web directory of regional and national museums.

RESEARCH THE MONARCHY?

www.royal.gov.uk

The official site, where Her Maj will answer your queries.

www.dcs.hull.ac.uk/public/genealogy/royal

Where to find out about the Royal Family's genealogy.

INVESTIGATE MY FAMILY HISTORY?

www.familysearch.com

Births, marriages and deaths.

www.pro.gov.uk

Public Records Office advice.

BUY A BIT OF HISTORY?

www.collectiques.co.uk

Huge directory of online antiques.

www.TheAntiquesDirectory.co.uk

Where and how to buy old stuff.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

soc.history.war.world-war-ii

Continue your code investigations.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For WWII discussion, send an email containing the line 'subscribe WWII-L' to ***listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu***

GET CHATTING?

chat.genealogy.org

Family research in a chat room.

WORDS: CHRIS HADLEY; PICTURES: PA

Vivienne was unimpressed by the colonel's puppet show

Dream Doctor

www.dreamdoctor.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Sleep-talking, sleep-walking, nightmares, pre-cognitive dreams – sleep can result in some of the most disturbing mental phenomena that there are. So it's good to know that the Dream Doctor is there to reassure and explain – email him about any frightening sleep experience and he'll tell you why it's happened in a practical, sensible fashion. So if you're having weird dreams about plane crashes, waking to find yourself halfway downstairs or suffering from sleep paralysis, come here for a diagnosis and let the Doctor help you get a good night's rest.

'And then I was in a long tunnel'

WEIRD HUMAN PHENOMENA Combustion, fire-walking, turning invisible... what is your body capable of?

58 Signs Of Abduction

www.anw.com/aliens/52questions.htm ★★

Suffer from strange pulsing noises in your ears? Often experience unexplained nose bleeds? Always finding strange scars or marks on your body? Don't worry, you're not mad, you're just an alien abductee – if this site, which lists symptoms to look out for, is anything to go by. The fact that we at *the net* suffer most of them after a Friday night at the pub is deeply concerning.

Fire Walking

heartfire.com/firewalk/homefire.html ★★★★

A superb site – if your idea of fun is walking barefoot over a bed of fiery ashes. It's still interesting even if you've no intention of braving the coals: marvel at the pictures (including Ed Raintree taking 'a casual stroll over a record hot fire'), follow the hot links and read the theories. But heed the advice on the home page: 'Use your head – fire-walking is dangerous!' Surely feet are more effective?

Twins: close

Human Spontaneous Involuntary Invisibility

users1.ee.net/pmason/invisibility.html ★★

Ever get the feeling that people are ignoring you? Relax! It could merely be that you're suffering from Involuntary Invisibility, a rare condition where you turn into the Invisible Man for a short period. This site represents an open-minded view from the research of Donna Higbee, and includes the tales of Melanie from California, who

'That kebab was a bad 'un'

'became invisible while sitting on her own living room sofa and staring at the wall'. As you do.

Mystical Stigmata

www.newad vent.org/cathen/14294b.htm ★★★

A surprisingly un-biased account and discussion of stigmata from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, with facts about famous stigmatics and the characteristics of their symptoms. Most interesting, however, are the musings on the cause of it all; these include the possibility that not only are wounds the result of over-emotion, but the red liquid isn't blood at all, it's sweat. Yum.

Phantom Limbs

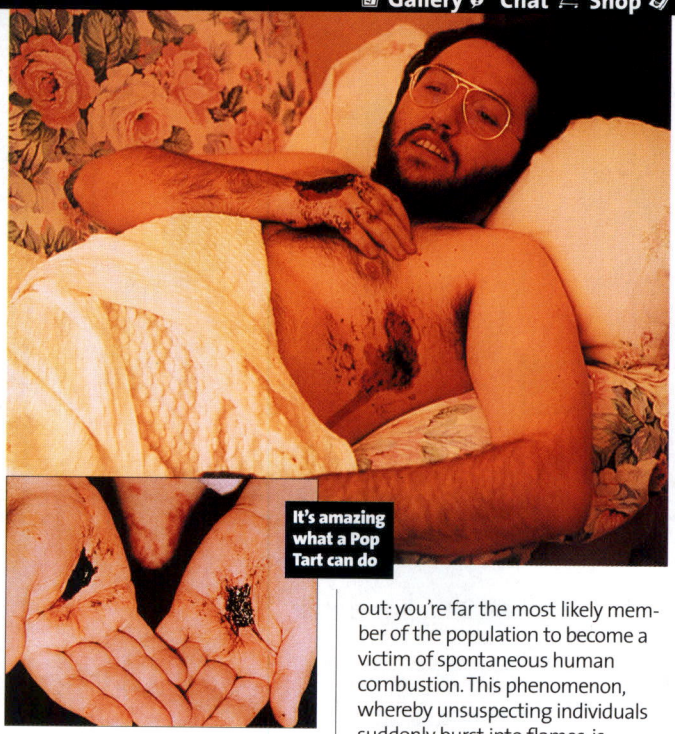
www.macalester.edu/~psych/whathap/UBNRP/Phantom/homepage.html ★★★

'When Mr Aryee lost his arm in 1983 he should not have had any feelings after its loss,' is the amazing insight on the first page of this site about amputees who can feel pain in their missing limbs. While it's informative enough about this strange physical phenomena, the tone is a tad patronising – and why there's a picture of Dangermouse by the 'Treatment' link is anyone's guess.

Psychic Encounters

www.psychics.co.uk ★★★★

If you don't believe that the mind can predict the future, sit back, relax and allow Craig and Jane Hamilton

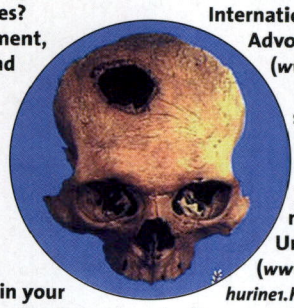


It's amazing what a Pop Tart can do

DON'T TRY THESE AT HOME, KIDS

BAD MEDICINE

Worried by what you've read on these pages? Whatever your ailment, you're bound to find a weird cure for it on the Net. For example, trepanning 'relieves depression and raises self-awareness'. Tempted? Then simply bore a hole in your head! Details of what to do can be found at the home of the International Trepanation Advocacy Group (*www.trepan.com*). If that doesn't sound like your cup of tea, simply 'take a sip from your own golden nectar'. Yes, it's Urine Therapy (*www.hps-online.com/hurine1.htm*). Say goodbye to those sore throat blues!



Parker to be your guides. Read the stories and features on this site, the footballers' rituals, and even a message from Princess Diana, before deciding whether it's a genuine physical phenomenon or a load of old tosh.

Social History of Co-joined Twins

zygote.swarthmore.edu/cleave4b.html ★★★

Siamese twins (or co-joined twins, to give them their correct name)

have figured in myths and legends for thousands of years. This is a fascinating article on some of the twins who made it into the big time despite their obvious problems. Apparently it's possible to have a relatively normal life; famous twins Chang and Eng Bunker married a pair of sisters in 1843, and went on to father a total of 21 children over the next 31 years...

Spontaneous Human Combustion

www.castleofspirits.com/shc.html ★★★

If you're an overweight female who drinks a lot then you'd better look out: you're far the most likely member of the population to become a victim of spontaneous human combustion. This phenomenon, whereby unsuspecting individuals suddenly burst into flames, is 'explained' here, along with speculation about its cause and plenty of photographs of people who have suffered from a gruesome fate. We guarantee that you'll never be able to look at a BK Flamer in the same way again.

Travelling Beyond the Body

www.acadiacom.net/studynet/index2.html ★★★★

Travelling Beyond the Body (with Alan Guiden!) is, as the name suggests, a resource to help you have an Out of Body Experience (otherwise referred to as an OOBE) – and stay in control when you do. It's actually an online version of a book, but it's presented in an easy-to-digest fashion: the information includes signals prior to 'lift-out' and details on how to travel. 'Real information, no jargon, no charge!' proclaims the front page proudly, which just about sums up the whole site perfectly.

best weird sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND WEIRD NEWS?

www.joeha.com/whiteboard
A collection of those silly little stories to email your mates.
www.tabloid.net
National Enquirer-style paper, which mixes truth and fiction.
members.aol.com/JACO70/wackynewz1.index.html
Everything and anything strange, from celebrities to little green men.
www.anorak.co.uk
Cataloguing the weirdest stuff from the British tabloids.

FIND THE REAL X-FILES?

www.seti-inst.edu
The world's top ET-hunters try to track down those elusive little green men.
www.ufomag.co.uk
Home of *UFO Magazine*, with plenty of thought-provoking debate.
foia.fbi.gov/unusual.htm
Over 1,600 pages of previously secret material from the FBI.
www.foia.ucia.gov
More grainy, indistinct documents from the US Government's vaults.

LEARN ABOUT CULTS?

cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/home.html
The maddest cults in the world, lovingly detailed for your perusal.
www.mayhem.net/crime/cults.html
Find out what happens when dangerous cults go over the edge.
www.factnet.org
Regular newsletter dedicated to tracking scary sects worldwide.
www.religioustolerance.org/destruct.htm
Get the lowdown on potentially dangerous cults before you join.

SEE WACKY WEBCAMS?

www.irelandseye.com/ghost/map.html
Try and spot a ghost in Ireland.
www.lochness.co.uk/livecam
Look for Nessie in all her glory, without travelling to Scotland.
www.jpl.nasa.gov/flower
Watch the 'corpse flower' – which smells like burning flesh – bloom.
www.flyvision.org/sitelite/Houston/GhostWatcher
Webcams from people who believe they might actually have a ghost.

FIND OUT ABOUT AREA 51?

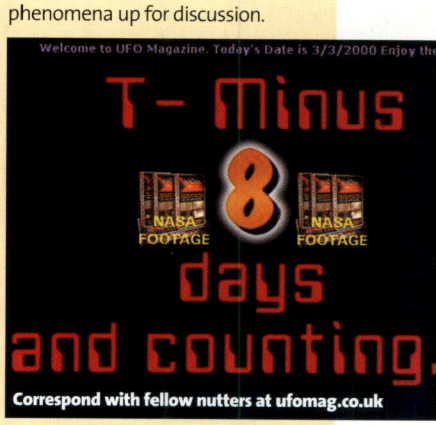
www.ufomind.com/area51
A hefty resource on the secret base.
www.nauticom.net/users/ata/area51.html
Excellent site. Includes travel tips. Those guards can shoot to kill.
www.parascope.com/articles/1196/area1.htm
Find a photograph of the infamous black mailbox here.

FIND A CONSPIRACY THEORY?

www.disinfo.com
Conspiracies for the whole family.
www.4conspiracytheories.com
A wealth of conspiratorial links.
www.conspire.com
Sceptical tales with tongue placed firmly in cheek.
www.larouchepub.com
Very, very worrying indeed.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.paranormal
All manner of weird and wonderful phenomena up for discussion.



JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the generally weird via the 'Generally Weird' list from
www.integral.org/mailman/listinfo/generallyweird

GET CHATTING?

www.scibernet.com/xfiles
Drop in for regular chats with those who know that the truth is out there somewhere.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY, KOBAL

GAMES Want a playmate? Gameplay.com can put you in touch with friendly types like this

FOOD Fill your face at www.meals.com

If it's not here, it's

Only the best sites get into our monthly updated guide to the Web. Whether you're looking

BANKING

Abbey National ***www.abbeynational.co.uk***
Alliance & Leicester ***www.alliance-leicester.co.uk***
Barclays ***www.barclays.co.uk***
Capital Bank plc ***www.capitalbank.co.uk***
Citibank ***www.citibank.com/uk***
Co-operative Bank ***www.co-operativebank.co.uk***
Direct Line ***www.directline.com***
Egg ***www.egg.co.uk***
First Direct ***www.firstdirect.co.uk***
First-e ***www.first-e.com***
Halifax ***www.halifax.co.uk***
HSBC ***www.banking.hsbc.co.uk***
LloydsTSB ***www.lloydstsb.co.uk***
Nationwide ***www.nationwide.co.uk***
NatWest ***www.natwest.co.uk***
Smile ***www.smile.co.uk***

CLASSIFIEDS

Ad-Mart Classifieds ***www.ad-mart.co.uk***
Economist Classifieds Market Place ***www.classified.economist.com***
Eureka-net ***www.eureka-net.co.uk***
Free Classified ***www.freeclassified.co.uk***
JJ Electronic Plaza Classifieds ***www.jjplaza.com/onlinead***
Localads ***www.localads.net***
London's Classifieds ***www.classifieds-free.net***
LOOT ***www.loot.com***
netTRADER ***www.nettrader.co.uk***
PhotoAds ***www.photoads.co.uk***
Photographic Ads ***www.nitehawk.com/iga/ads.html***

DOWNLOADS

Apple ***asu.info.apple.com***
DaveCentral ***www.davecentral.com***
Download Net ***www.download.net***
Download Warehouse ***www.downloadwarehouse.com***
Freeware ***www.freewarehome.com***
ICQ ***www.icq.com***
Memoware ***www.memoware.com***
Microsoft ***www.microsoft.com***
MP3 ***www.mp3.com***
Real Player ***www.real.com***
Shareware ***www.download.com***
ZDNet ***www.hotfiles.com***

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Encarta ***encarta.msn.com***
Encyclopedia Britannica ***www.britannica.com***
Encyclopedia.com ***www.encyclopedia.com***
Funkandwagnalls ***www.funkandwagnalls.com***
Hutchinson Encyclopedia ***www.bt-ern.co.uk/helicon***

FOOD AND DRINK

Cooking Index ***www.cookingindex.com***
Food Channel ***www.foodchannel.com***
KitchenLink ***www.kitchenlink.com***
Meals.com ***www.meals.com***
Meals For You ***www.mealsforyou.com***
Restaurants.co.uk ***www.restaurants.co.uk***
Room Service ***www.roomservice.co.uk***
UK Local Restaurant ***www.local-restaurant.com***
Wine Spectator ***www.winespectator.com***

GAMES

GUIDES AND COMPANIES

Dreamcast ***www.dreamcast.com***
Future Games Network ***www.fgnetwork.com***
GameCenter ***www.gamecenter.com***
Game Daily ***www.gamedaily.com***
Gameplay ***www.gameplay.com***
GameSpot ***www.gamespot.com***
GameSpyder ***www.gamespyder.com***
GameStats ***www.gamestats.com***
GA Source ***www.ga-source.com***
MacGaming ***www.maccentral.com/games***
MultiPlayer ***www.multiplayer.com***
Nintendo ***www.nintendo.com***
PlayStation ***www.playstation.com***
Sega ***www.sega-europe.com***
Total Video Games ***www.totalvideogames.com***
Yahoo! ***games.yahoo.com***
Zone ***www.zone.com***

GENEALOGY

British Ancestral Research ***www.brit-a-r.demon.co.uk***
British Heraldic Institute ***www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry***
Family Search ***www.familysearch.com***
Genealogy Research Source ***www.genealogy.bookpub.net***
Public Record Office ***www.pro.gov.uk***
Rootsweb ***www.rootsweb.com***

GOVERNMENT

BRITAIN

10 Downing Street ***www.number-10.gov.uk***
Arts Council ***www.artscouncil.org.uk***
Department for Culture, Media and Sport ***www.culture.gov.uk***
Department of Health ***www.doh.gov.uk***
Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions ***www.detr.gov.uk***
Ministry of Defence ***www.mod.uk***
Open.gov.uk ***www.open.gov.uk***
Scottish Parliament ***www.scotland.gov.uk***
Welsh Assembly ***www.wales.gov.uk***

THE WORLD

Australia ***www.fed.gov.au***
China ***www.gov.cn***
European Commission ***europa.eu.int***
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
Germany ***www.bundesregierung.de***
Russia ***www.gov.ru***
United Nations ***www.un.org***
United States ***www.whitehouse.gov***

HEALTH

DOCTORS & DIAGNOSIS

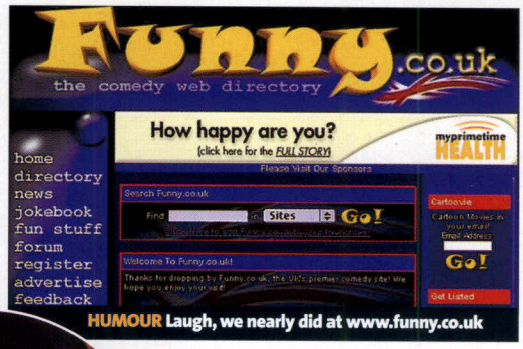
Ask Dr Weil ***cgi.pathfinder.com/drweil***
Ask The Doc ***www.ask-the-doc.com***
British Medical Journal ***www.bmj.com***
Healthy Ideas ***www.healthyideas.com***
Intelihealth ***www.intelihealth.com***
Mayo Clinic ***www.mayo.edu***
MedRef ***www.medscout.com***
Mental Health ***www.mentalhealth.com***
Patient ***www.patient.co.uk***

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

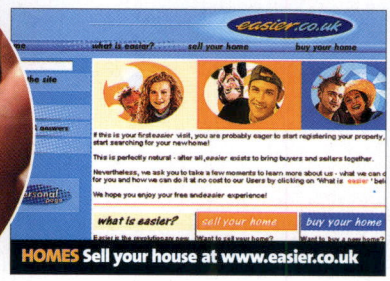
Alcoholics Anonymous ***www.alcoholics-anonymous.org***

WORDS: IMAGEBANK, PICTURES: AKG PHOTO, EMPICS, MOVIESTORE, PA

HEALTH Improve your mind and body: learn how to be a tree at www.intelihealth.com



HUMOUR Laugh, we nearly did at www.funny.co.uk



HOMES Sell your house at www.easier.co.uk

not worth seeing

for a service, a shop or simply a lunchtime laugh, you'll find what you need in these pages

Alzheimer's Disease Society ***www.alzheimers.org.uk***
Cancer Bacup ***www.cancerbacup.org.uk***
Centre For Online Addiction ***netaddiction.com***
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
Don't Smoke ***www.dontsmoke.com***
Fitness Online ***www.fitnessonline.com***
HIV/AIDS Information & Links ***www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm***
National Meningitis Trust ***www.meningitis-trust.org.uk***
WeightWatchers ***uk.weightwatchers.com***

HOMES

ESTATE AGENTS

Bushells ***www.bushells.com***
Chancellors ***www.chancellors.co.uk***
CityLet ***www.citylet.com***
Cluttons Daniel Smith ***www.cluttons.com***
Foxtons ***www.foxtons.co.uk***
Friend & Falcke ***www.friendandfalcke.co.uk***
Goldschmidt Howland ***www.goldschmidt-howland.co.uk***
Hamptons ***www.hamptons.co.uk***
John D. Wood ***www.johndwood.co.uk***
Knight Frank ***www.knightfrank.co.uk***
Strutt & Parker ***www.struttandparker.co.uk***
Winkworth ***www.winkworth.co.uk***
Your Move ***www.your-move.co.uk/your_move.html***

PROPERTY FINDERS

Accommodation Directory ***www.accommodation.com***
Byehome ***www.byehome.com***
Easier.co.uk ***www.easier.co.uk***
HomeDirectory ***www.homedirectory.com***
Homefile UK ***www.homefileuk.co.uk***
Home Free Home ***www.homefreehome.co.uk***
Homepages ***www.homepages.co.uk***
Home to Home ***www.home-to-home.co.uk***
Home Sale ***www.home-sale.co.uk***
HouseNet ***www.housenet.co.uk***
Internet Property Finder ***www.propertyfinder.co.uk***
Lets Direct ***www.letsdirect.co.uk***
Pavilions of Splendour ***www.heritage.co.uk***
Property Sight ***www.property-sight.co.uk***
UK Property Gold ***www.ukpg.co.uk***

HUMOUR

Comedy Zone ***www.comedy-zone.net***
Cyber Comedian ***webtamers.com/comedian.html***
Funny ***www.funny.co.uk***
JokeDepot ***www.jokedepot.com***
JokePost ***www.jokepost.com***
Jongleurs ***www.jongleurs.com***
The Onion ***www.theonion.com***
The Simpsons ***www.foxworld.com/simpsons***
South Park ***www.comedycentral.com***
Uproar ***www.uproar.com***

JOBS

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Brook Street ***www.brookstreet.co.uk***
Independent Appointments ***www.indappts.co.uk***
Manpower ***www.manpower.co.uk***
Reed ***www.reed.co.uk***

JOB SEARCHES

Ask4 ***www.ask4.co.uk***
Expat Network ***www.expatnetwork.co.uk***
Gradunet ***www.gradunet.co.uk***
Guardian ***www.jobsunlimited.co.uk***
Jobsearch UK ***www.jobsearch.co.uk***
Jobsite ***www.jobsite.co.uk***
MonsterBoard ***www.monster.co.uk***
Overseas Jobs ***www.overseasjobs.com***
Personnelnet ***www.personnelnet.com***
Stepstone ***www.stepstone.co.uk***
Temp Jobs ***www.tempjobs.co.uk***
Total Jobs ***www.totaljobs.com***
Yelcom ***www.yelcom.com***

KIDS

0-8

Bedtime stories ***www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story***
Cartoon Network ***www.cartoonnetwork.co.uk***
Disney Channel ***www.disneychannel.co.uk***
FunSchool ***www.funschool.com***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
Nickelodeon ***www.nickjr.com***
Sesame Street ***www.sesamestreet.com/preschool***

8 PLUS

AJ Kids ***www.ajkids.com***
BBC Schools Online ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools***
Club-Z ***www.club-z.com***
EduWeb ***www.eduweb.co.uk***
Family Education ***www.familyeducation.com***
BJ Pinchbeck Homework Helper ***www.bjpinchbeck.com***
Tarzan ***disney.go.com/worldsofdisney/tarzan***
Teen Advice ***www.teenadvice.net***
Thunk ***www.thunk.com***
Yahooligans ***www.yahooligans.com***

LAW

Desktop Lawyer ***www.desktoplawyer.freeserve.net***
Divorce Online ***www.divorce-online.co.uk***
Law Rights ***www.lawright.co.uk***
Legaldocs ***www.legaldocs.com***
UK Law Online ***www.leeds.ac.uk/law/hamlyn***

MAGAZINES

ONLINE MAGS

Dredly ***www.dredly.com***
Foocha ***www.foocha.com***
Garbled Communications UK ***www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Show/1322***

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Seven ***www.sevenmag.com***
Slate ***www.slate.com***
Suck ***www.suck.com***
Teeth ***www.teethmag.com***
Word ***www.word.com***

MOTORING
CAR MANUFACTURERS
Audi ***www.audi.co.uk***
BMW ***www.bmw.co.uk***
Citroen ***www.citroen.co.uk***
Ferrari ***www.ferrari.it***
Fiat ***www.fiat.co.uk***
Ford ***www.ford.co.uk***
Honda ***www.honda.co.uk***
Jaguar ***www.jaguarcars.com***
Lotus ***www.lotuscars.co.uk***
Mazda ***www.mazda.co.uk***
Mercedes-Benz ***www.mercedes-benz.co.uk***
Nissan ***www.nissan-europe.com***
Peugeot ***www.peugeot.co.uk***
Porsche ***www.porsche.co.uk***
Rover ***www.rover.co.uk***
Toyota ***www.toyota.co.uk***
Vauxhall ***www.vauxhall.co.uk***
Volkswagen ***www.volkswagen.co.uk***
Volvo ***www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk***

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES
Imperial War Museum ***www.iwm.org.uk***
National Gallery ***www.nationalgallery.org.uk***
Natural History Museum ***www.nhm.ac.uk***
Tate Gallery ***www.tate.org.uk***

MUSIC
BRITISH MP3 PORTALS
Brand New Music ***www.brandnewmusic.com***
Crunch ***www.crunch.co.uk***
Get Out There ***www.getoutthere.bt.com***
Getsigned.com ***www.get-signed.com***
Music Unsigned ***www.musicunsigned.com***
Peoplesound ***www.peoplesound.com***
Vitaminic ***www.vitaminic.co.uk***

TOP ARTISTS
The Beatles ***members.tripod.com/~taz4158/pepper.html***
Blur ***www.blur.co.uk***
David Bowie ***www.davidbowie.com***
Boyzone ***www.boyzone.co.uk***
Catatonia ***www.catatonia.com***
Macy Gray ***www.macygray.com***
Jamiroquai ***www.jamiroquai.co.uk***
Manic Street Preachers ***www.manics.co.uk***
Oasis ***www.oasisinet.com***
Prince ***www.love4oneanother.com***
Radiohead ***www.radiohead.co.uk***
REM ***www.remhq.com***
Spice Girls ***superspice.hypermart.net***
Stereophonics ***www.stereophonics.co.uk***
Supergrass ***www.supergrass.com***
Travis ***www.travisonline.com***
Robbie Williams ***www.robbiewilliams.co.uk***

NEWS
NEWS SERVICES
BBC ***news.bbc.co.uk***
CNN ***www.cnn.com***
ITN ***www.itn.co.uk***
NewsNow ***www.newsnow.co.uk***
News Unlimited ***www.newsunlimited.co.uk***
PA News ***www.pa.press.net***
Reuters ***www.reuters.com/news***

PEOPLE FINDERS
EMAIL ADDRESSES
Bigfoot ***bigfoot.com***
EmailFinder ***www.emailfinder.com***
People Site ***www.peoplesite.com***
WhoWhere ***www.whowhere.com***
Yahoo ***people.yahoo.com***

PHONE NUMBERS
BT Directory Enquiries ***www.bt.co.uk/phonenetuk***
Thomson Directories ***www.thomweb.co.uk***
Yellow Pages ***www.yell.co.uk***

RADIO
STATION DIRECTORIES
Broadcast ***www.broadcast.com/radio***
On The Air ***www.ontheair.com***
Radio Directory ***www.radiodirectory.com***
Radio Now ***www.radionow.co.uk***
Radio On The Internet ***www.radio-on-the-internet.com***
RealGuide ***realguide.real.com***

SCIENCE
NEWS AND UPDATES
BBC Science ***news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm***
Eureka Alert ***www.eurekalert.org***
NASA ***science.nasa.gov***
New Scientist ***www.newscientist.com***
WhyFiles ***whyfiles.news.wisc.edu***

SEARCH ENGINES
Altavista ***www.altavista.digital.com***
Ask Jeeves ***www.askjeeves.com***
Dogpile ***www.dogpile.com***
Electric Library ***www.elibrary.com***
FAST ***alltheweb.com***
Google ***www.google.com***
HotBot ***www.hotbot.com***
Lycos ***www.lycos.com***
MetaCrawler ***www.metacrawler.com***
Mirago ***www.mirago.co.uk***
Northern Light ***www.nlsearch.com***
Pandia Search Central ***www.pandia.com***

SHOPPING
ONLINE AUCTIONS
Auction Hunter ***www.auctionhunter.co.uk***
Auction Universe ***www.auctionuniverse.co.uk***
eBay ***www.ebay.co.uk***
eBid ***www.ebid.co.uk***
eSwap ***www.eswap.co.uk***
Eurobid ***www.eurobid.com***
Last Minute ***www.lastminute.com***
QXL ***www.qxl.com***
What Am I Bid? ***www.whatamibid.com***

SHOPPING DIRECTORIES
Best of British ***www.bestofbritish.com***
Buckingham Gate ***www.buckinghamgate.co.uk***
Centreshop ***www.centreshop.com***
Enterprise City ***www.enterprisecity.co.uk***
IMRG ***shops.imrg.org***
Internet Shopping ***www.internetshopping.com***
ShopGuide ***www.shopguide.co.uk***
Shoppers Universe ***shoppersuniverse.com***
Shopping UK ***www.internetics.co.uk/shop***
ShopSmart ***www.shopsmart.com***
Shops On The Net ***www.sotn.com***
Shop Spy ***www.shopspy.co.uk***
ShopYell ***www.shopyell.co.uk***
Taxi ***www.mytaxi.co.uk***
Virtual Mall ***www.thevirtualmall.co.uk***
UK Max ***www.ukmax.co.uk/shopping***
UK Shopping Zone ***ukshoppingzone.co.uk***

SPORT
FA PREMIERSHIP CLUBS
Arsenal ***www.arsenal.co.uk***
Aston Villa ***www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk***
Bradford City ***www.bradfordcityfc.co.uk***
Chelsea ***www.chelseafc.co.uk***
Coventry City ***www.ccfc.co.uk***
Derby County ***www.dcfc.co.uk***
Everton ***www.evertonfc.com***
Leeds United ***www.lufc.co.uk***
Leicester City ***www.lcfc.co.uk***
Liverpool ***www.liverpoolfc.net***
Manchester United ***www.manutd.com***
Middlesbrough ***www.mfc.co.uk***
Newcastle United ***www.nufc.co.uk***
Sheffield Wednesday ***www.swfc.co.uk***
Southampton ***www.saintsfc.co.uk/index.htm***
Sunderland ***www.sunderland-afc.com***
Tottenham Hotspur ***www.spurs.co.uk***

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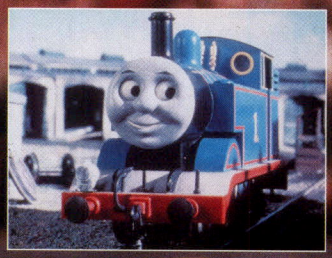

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SPORT Get stuck in at www.scrum.com

Watford ***www.watfordfc.com***
West Ham Utd ***www.whufc.co.uk***
Wimbledon
www.wimbledon-fc.co.uk

SPORT A-Z

Athletics ***www.nuff-respect.co.uk***
Basketball ***www.nba.com***
Boxing ***www.boxingonline.com***
Cricket ***www.cricinfo.com***
Fishing ***www.fishing.co.uk***
Football ***www.football365.co.uk***
Golf ***Golf.com***
Hockey ***www.fieldhockey.com***
Martial Arts
www.martial-arts-network.com
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Racing ***www.sporting-life.com***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.scrum.com***
Skiing ***www.complete-skier.com***
Tennis ***www.itftennis.com***

STYLE AND FASHION

MAIN SITES

BeautyLink ***www.beautylink.com***
Boo.com ***www.boo.com***
Cosmopolitan ***www.cosmomag.com***
Elle ***www.ellemag.com***
Fashion And Beauty Internet Association ***www.fbia.com***
Fashionfile ***www.fashionfile.co.uk***
Fashion Mall ***www.fashionmall.com***
FashionNet ***www.fashion.net***
Models.com ***www.models.com***
Salonweb ***www.salonweb.com***
Style Experts ***www.stylexperts.com***
Vogue ***www.vogue.com***

TELEVISION

TOP SHOWS

Big Breakfast
bigbreakfast.channel4.com
Brookside ***www.brookie.com***
Coronation Street
www.coronationstreet.co.uk
EastEnders
www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders
Friends ***friends.warnerbros.com***
Hollyoaks ***www.hollyoaks.com***
Neighbours ***www.neighbours.com***
Jerry Springer ***www.universalstudios.com/tv/jerryspringer***
X-Files ***www.thex-files.com***

TV COMPANIES

BBC ***www.bbc.co.uk***
Channel Four ***www.channel4.co.uk***
Channel Five ***www.channel5.co.uk***
ITV ***www.itv.co.uk***
Sky ***www.sky.co.uk***

TRAVEL

AIRLINES

Air Canada ***www.aircanada.ca***
Air France ***www.airfrance.com***
American Airlines ***www.aa.com***
Britannia
www.britanniaairways.com
BA ***www.british-airways.com***
BM ***www.iflybritishmidland.com***
Buzz ***www.buzzaway.com***
Continental
www.flycontinental.com
Easy Jet ***www.easyjet.com***
Go ***www.go-fly.com***
Iberia ***www.iberia.com***
KLM ***www.klmuk.com***
Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
Qantas ***www.qantas.com.au***
United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
Virgin Air ***www.virgin-atlantic.com***

DESTINATION GUIDES

Australia ***australia-online.com***
Caribbean
www.caribbean-travel.com
France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece
www.areianet.gr/infoxenios
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Ireland ***www.irelandseye.com***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Lonely Planet ***www.lonelyplanet.com***
Portugal ***www.portugal-web.com***
Ski Club Of Great Britain
www.skiclub.co.uk
Spain ***www.spaintour.com***
UK ***www.visitbritain.com***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

FERRIES

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.poef.com/poef/index.htm***
Travel Britain
www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html
Travel.World
www.travel.world.co.uk/ferries.htm

RAIL TRAVEL

Euro Railways
www.eurorailways.com
Great Eastern Railway
www.ger.co.uk
Great Western Trains
www.great-western-trains.co.uk
Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
Trainline ***www.thetrainline.com***
UK Public Transport Information
www.pti.org.uk
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

TRAVEL AGENTS

A2B ***www.a2btravel.com***
Airtickets ***www.airtickets.co.uk***
Bargain Holidays
www.bargainholidays.org
Biztravel ***www.biztravel.com***
Campus Travel
www.campustravel.co.uk
Cheap Flights
www.cheapflights.co.uk
Deckchair
www.deckchair.com
ebookers ***www.ebookers.com***
Expedia ***www.expedia.co.uk***
Holiday Wizard ***www.holidaywizard.co.uk***
Internet Travel Services
www.itsnet.co.uk
Last Minute
www.lastminute.com
STA Travel
www.statravel.co.uk
Thomas Cook
www.thomascook.co.uk
Thomson
www.thomson-holidays.com
Trailfinders ***www.trailfinder.com***
Travelocity ***www.travelocity.com***

WEBCAMS

DIRECTORIES

Allcam ***www.allcam.com***
Camcity ***www.camcity.com***
Digital Camera Network
www.dcn.com
Earthcam
www.earthcam.com
Webcam Central
www.camcentral.com
WebCam World
www.webcamworld.com
Webviews ***www.webviews.co.uk***

FAVOURITES

AfriCam ***www.africam.com***
The Dolls' House
www.bravo.co.uk/dolls
Howletts Zoo ***www.howletts.net***
Interactive Model Railroad
rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de
Jennicam ***www.jennicam.org***
Radio 1
www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/inside_r1
Ultimate Taxi
www.ultimatetaxi.com
WalfordCam ***www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/walfordcam***

WEB CENSORS

Cybersnoop ***www.pearlsw.com***
Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***

WEB DIRECTORIES

About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind
www.aol.com/netfind
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart
www.looksmart.com
Open Directory ***www.dmoz.org***
UK Plus ***www.ukplus.co.uk***
WebCrawler
www.webcrawler.com
Yahoo! ***www.yahoo.com***
Yell ***www.yell.co.uk***

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16 pages that will change the way you use the Net

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This is Freeserve, the UK's No. 1 for the Internet. More than 1.7 million people are signed up and surfing with the nation's most popular Internet Service Provider (ISP), taking advantage of the many great free services provided by Freeserve.

When you sign up with Freeserve, you don't get charged for Internet access. Unlike many ISPs, Freeserve don't charge you for the privilege of being on the Net. Nor do you get charged for the unlimited e-mail addresses which Freeserve will give you. Furthermore, you can have 15 megabytes of website space to do with as you please, and Freeserve doesn't charge you a bean for it. How do you create that website? With free software provided with your start-up Freeserve CD.

Now you're beginning to understand why Freeserve is so popular. True to the name, Freeserve doesn't charge you a thing to get on the Net; the only thing you pay for is the phone call to connect to the Web. This charge, which you pay to your phone company, is out of Freeserve's hands.

If you're a Net novice, don't worry. It's all very simple, and Freeserve will help you at every step. The homepage at ***www.freeserve.net*** is your starting-point for the Web, and there's an on-line help section at ***www.freeserve.net/support***.

How do you start? Get hold of the Freeserve start-up CD, which you can pick up (free, of course) at any branch of Dixons, Currys, PC World, The Link or @jakarta. Or, if you're already on-line and surfing, sign up on-line at ***www.freeserve.net***.

E-MAIL

The instant post office

Ever needed to get a message to someone urgently? Would it make your life much easier if that message could be replied to within minutes? With e-mail, it can be. You can send e-mails to the other side of the world, and they can be replied to within minutes by friends, families and business associates with the minimum of fuss. And with Freeserve, you don't have to pay a penny for the service.

When you sign up with Freeserve, you get an unlimited number of e-mail addresses for free. You don't pay for each message you send and you don't pay to receive them; all you have to pay is the cost of the local call to connect to the Internet.

OUR SITE

Home on the Web

Cyberspace, like space itself, is vast and unchartable. You could trawl across it forever in search of the best information, entertainment and education, but there's no need to. Why? Because the best of the Net is all in one place.

Freeserve's homepage at *www.freeserve.net* is your home on the Web. The ever-expanding range of content on Freeserve's site will bring you the best there is to see. There are several chunky channels stuffed with entertainment, education, information and business. From films to Formula 1, from food to football, money to music, telly to travel… it's all on-line with Freeserve's channels.

Newshounds can keep an ear to the ground for the latest developments, while those with a weather eye don't have to keep watching the skies. There's a dedicated channel for women, one for small business owners, all the latest music and movies on the Entertainment channel and much, much more. Read the bottom of this page and the next two pages for more details on Freeserve's ever-improving list of channels.

What's more, Freeserve has recently redesigned its homepage to make it even easier for you to navigate. It's like a home from home.

'Building a website used to be for boffins, but these days it's increasingly easy with Freeserve'

YOUR SITE

Spin your own Web

Got a burning story you want to tell the world? Now you can with the advent of the worldwide Web – and Freeserve. Building a website used to be strictly for boffins, but these days it's getting easy, as ready-made software helps you through the process and does all the technical wizardry on your behalf.

The software is free on the Freeserve CD, but where do you put your site? Well, when you join up with Freeserve you get a sizeable 15Mb chunk of cyberspace to build your own site with, held on Freeserve's central computers so you don't clog up your machine. So with Freeserve, you'll soon be on the Net!

Cookie crew
Ever been confused by your computer asking you about cookies? Find out why it doesn't mean that your PC's peckish.
page xiv

SPEECHMAIL

How to get your e-mail by phone – thanks to Freeserve

Ever wanted – or needed – to get to your e-mails when you couldn't get Internet access? Now you can with a brand new initiative from Freeserve – Speechmail.

With Speechmail, you can access your e-mail messages over the phone without even needing to switch your computer on! And as you would expect, there's no service charge for Freeserve customers.

When you sign up, you're allocated a phone number which you can use to access your mail. You can ring it from any phone, including your mobile, giving you total freedom from your modem!

When you ring up, you can use spoken commands or press the keypad to access your messages. You need never go uninformed again!
www.speechmail.freeserve.net/

CHANNEL GUIDE

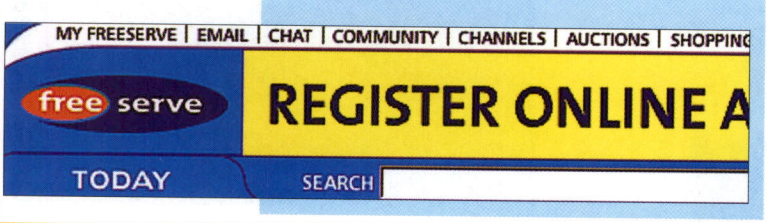
Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Introduction

Never one to stand still, Freeserve has overhauled its channel services with a brand new look. Here and on the next two pages, read how the ever-excellent content has been reorganised into easy-to-use channels.

Today

Freeserve has always strived to provide the best content on the Web, with new information and entertainment doors opening every month. After months on end of amazing expansion, the front page at *www.freeserve.net* was beginning to be a bit crowded; now, however, it's been redesigned to make navigation around the site much easier. The new homepage has been styled as the Today channel, with an exciting mix of topical content and features to enjoy. Go there today!



Auctions

The thrill of bidding for items at bargain prices is no longer confined to auction rooms. Simply go to *www.fsauctions.co.uk*, peruse the wide variety of merchandise on offer and place your bid. You'll be informed if someone has bettered your bid – then it's up to you to decide whether or not to go higher to claim the goodies…

Business

Do you run a small business, on-line or off? If so, you could benefit from Freeserve's Business channel. From conference calls to calling cards, you'll find that the Business channel is your one-stop shop for all your needs.

Image Bank

Welcome

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www.freeserve.net

SUPER SUNDAY

The Shopping channel is going mad in March and April with a host of money-saving offers going under the name of Super Sunday. For several Sundays in succession, there are 'happy hours' – in fact, four hours each time – between 6pm and 10pm. Shoppers can get money vouchers or save several percent on the goods on offer. It all comes to a head with Super Sunday itself, 16 April, when dozens of the top stores on SHOP@freeserve will be offering great savings on their goodies.

Easter bargains

Easter: the season of rebirth, rejuvenation and resurrection. For generations beyond recall, families and friends have given each other eggs as symbols of this rebirth; and if the idea of a fried, poached, scrambled or boiled egg doesn't make your stomach rumble, then you'll be glad of the more recent innovation which chocoholics celebrate: the choccy Easter egg.

The range of melt-in-the-mouth goodies to enjoy on Easter Sunday morning has proliferated in recent years; whatever your favourite chocolate bar, chances are there'll be an egg designed around it. Whether you're mad on Mars, bonkers about Bounty or gaga for Galaxy, you can get ovular versions of all your favourites.

As ever, Freeserve is on hand to help you choose the best chocs to mark the occasion. The constantly expanding Shopping channel at *www.freeserve.net* now has two components to choose from. Firstly, there's all the quality and diversity of the major High Street stores on SHOP@freeserve. Then there's the new Marketplace section, which gives unique retailers up and down the land the chance to display their custom-crafted wares on the Web.

When it comes to chocolate, you'll find no name more respected than Thorntons. 'Chocolate Heaven since 1911' is their slogan, and there's no arguing that Thorntons know how to make chocolate that melts in the mouth. Their site on Freeserve at *www.freeserve.net/shopping/retailers/thorntons.htm* is a chocoholic's dream, featuring every fancy from the most luxurious Easter eggs on the market to cute Millennium Jelly Bugs.

However you like your chocs, check out SHOP@freeserve for the best on the Web.

CHANNEL GUIDE

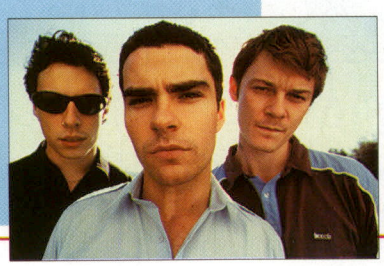
Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Careers

You're wired, now get hired – not fired. The Careers channel lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide; you can even apply on-line, or submit your CV and wait for employers in your area to come to you!

Entertainment

The latest releases in the worlds of film and music are all here on Freeserve's newly expanded Entertainment channel. From Stravinsky to the Stereophonics and Tarantino to Toy Story 2, it's all in Entertainment.



Learning

From pre-school right through to A-level, Freeserve Education is there to help you through your studies with an interactive learning environment to encourage learning skills.

Life

New from Freeserve, the Life channel is an exclusive features magazine which brings you the latest lowdown on everything that matters, on-line and off. Whatever you're into, you'll enjoy Life.

Money

Freeserve will help you keep your finances healthy with expert advice. Whether you want savings tips or advice on choosing an ISA, you can keep your pocket full with Freeserve.

Get yourself connected – even faster

Freeserve trials super-fast Internet connection in London and Manchester, with more to come

Fancy increasing your surfing speed tenfold? That's the tantalising promise of High Speed Access, a new method of Internet connection which Freeserve is currently trialling.

Lucky surfers in London and Manchester who signed up for the trial are helping to assess the uses of High Speed Access.

Freeserve's High-Speed Internet Access uses a standard BT phone line, but an ADSL modem. So what's ADSL? It stands for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line, which is a data transfer technology that greatly increases the speed of a connection.

As an illustration, most home modems currently operate at 56Kbps – that is, they transfer 56 kilobytes of information to your computer per second. Freeserve's trial service is running at 512Kbps, almost 10 times the speed, and that's not all: ADSL is capable of transferring data at anything up to 2 megabytes (2000 kilobytes) per second. That's nearly 40 times as fast as a 56K modem.

However, High Speed Access isn't just faster. It opens up a new world of Net content, with high-quality video viewable on-line. It's a permanent connection, so there's no need to dial in and no Net call charges (it's a monthly flat fee). And using the Net doesn't affect your phone service – there are no missed calls.

As a result of these benefits, Freeserve's High Speed Access trialists have found they have been surfing for much longer than usual – in some cases for up to three times as long as before the trial. Perhaps that's because of the constantly-connected, fixed-price nature of the service; then again maybe it's because of the high-quality content.

Matches from the AXA Tennis Cup were webcast live as the trialists took advantage of the greater bandwidth provided by High Speed Access, and exciting new partners like ITN, Virgin and Peoplesound will be available when the service proper starts.

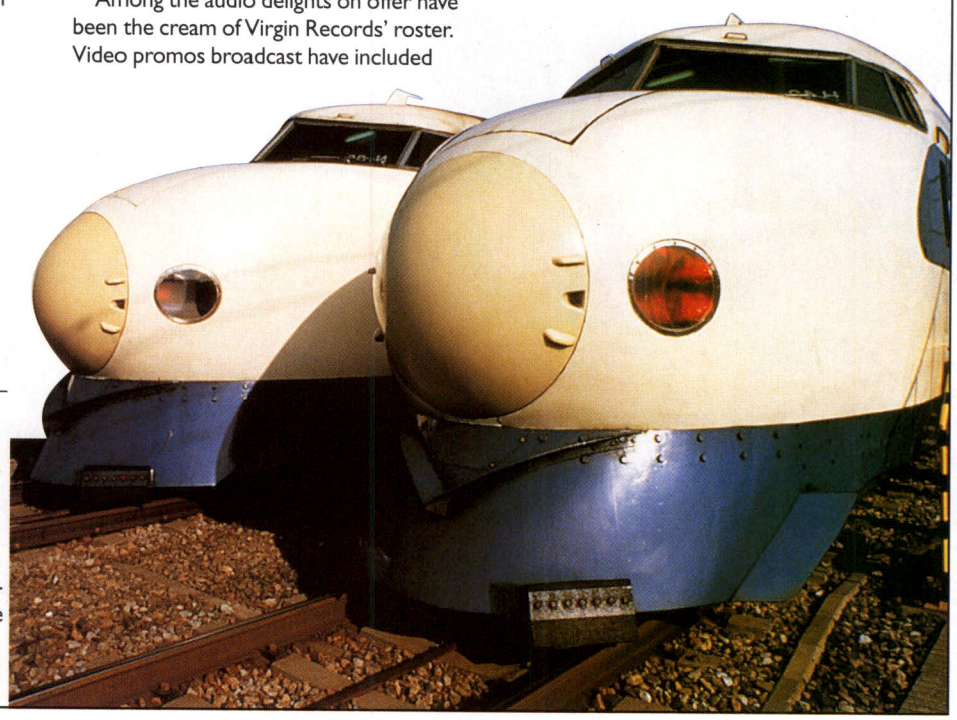
Beside the obvious benefits of ITN's content – 24-hour access to one of the world's top providers of news and sport information – on-line users will be able to enjoy ITN Radio through their PCs.

'Freeserve has been quick to see the fantastic opportunity in ADSL technology,' says Garron Baines, MD of ITN New Media. 'Home users can enjoy a much richer range of content on the Internet – video, audio and text.'

Among the audio delights on offer have been the cream of Virgin Records' roster. Video promos broadcast have included material from Massive Attack, the Chemical Brothers, David Bowie and Skunk Anansie.

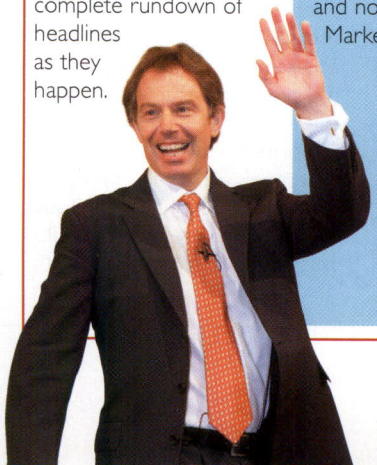
BT has announced that the business version of the High Speed Access service is to be fully launched in July, and the consumer version is also pencilled in for early summer. High Speed Access will be available to more than six million homes in areas including Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff, Coventry, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes and Newcastle. BT has stated an availability target of 75 percent of British homes by 2002, with an eventual target of 85 percent of homes.

Check out details of High Speed Access at *www.freeserve.net/highspeedtrial*.



News

Get tomorrow's papers today with this superb news service. You'll get all the latest UK and foreign stories, together with business news and a complete rundown of headlines as they happen.



Shopping

The Freeserve Shopping channel can provide flowers or food, a car or a computer. Look out for great deals and savings from SHOP@freeserve and now the new Marketplace retailers.

Sport

Whatever your sport, you'll find it on Freeserve. Football, tennis, cricket, rugby, Formula 1 or golf; you can get the results and follow your heroes on the Sport channel.

Travel

Click on Freeserve's Travel channel for instant access to a database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide. There are always sensational last-minute deals on offer.

Women

Women on the Web need look no further than Freeserve's iCircle channel for the latest features, information and advice.

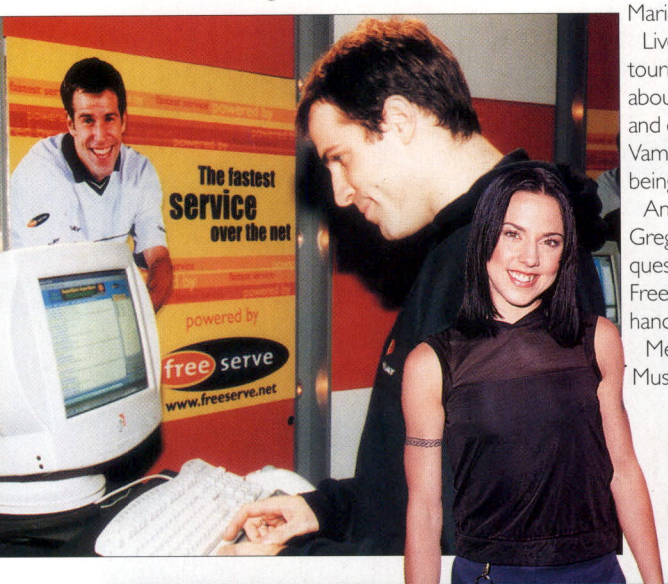
PA; Retna; Image Bank; Science Photo Library; Empics

Rusedski & Mel C chat on Freeserve

Tennis ace Greg reveals he likes Buffy – but does Spice Girl Mel fancy Five's J?

Freeserve brought top names in the world of sport and pop to the public last month. Tennis ace Greg Rusedski conducted a webchat, while top popster Mel C took part in an exclusive webcast on Freeserve.

It's not often Greg Rusedski isn't able to return service, but that's the situation he found himself in when he participated in a webchat during the Axa Tennis Cup in London's Docklands. The questions came so thick and fast that he didn't have time to answer them all. After all, he had to prepare for a match against Mariano Zabaleta the next day!

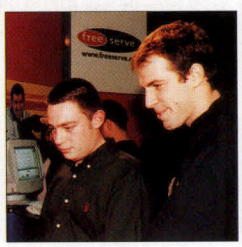


Live from the Freeserve stand at the tournament, Greg answered questions about tennis, married life, life in Britain and even popular TV show Buffy the Vampire Slayer (his favourite character being Buffy, of course).

An enthusiastic newcomer to the Net, Greg typed his own answers to the questions, although Steve James (one of Freeserve's business managers) was on hand to help if required.

Meanwhile visitors to the Freeserve Music channel got the goss from Mel C recently during a video-based webchat. During the chat, the Spice Girl and solo star revealed she was dating an unnamed 'famous boy'. The tabloid newspapers later suggested the suitor was boy-band Five member J – especially as during the webchat, Mel announced she was off to see Five in concert.

The webchat, which utilised RealPlayer streaming technology to include videos of Mel, was broadcast on Freeserve's music channel at *www.freeserve.net/music*. Answering questions sent in by her fans, the Brit Awards nominee waxed lyrical about her solo album Northern Star, the Spice Girls and life in general... as well as letting slip a few personal details!



'Freeserve is the UK's No.1 for the Internet'

John Pluthero, Chief Executive

NEW ON FREESERVE

Check out some of our great new features

Racing ahead

Freeserve are pleased to announce a sponsorship deal with Simon Harrison, the current National Saloon Car Champion. Simon will driving a Ford Focus sponsored by Freeserve as he strives to maintain his No.1 position. The series starts at Thruxton on 25 March and visits famous circuits like Brands Hatch, Donnington Park and Silverstone. The championship will receive TV coverage with a midday show every Saturday on Channel 4 as well as half-hour shows on ITV and the new ITV2 network. Follow Simon's progress on Freeserve at *www.freeserve.net*.

On the road

Freeserve Roadshow rolls around the country on a mission to bring the Internet to the public. The 46ft state-of-the-art Roadshow wagon has 22 Net-connected computers ready for the public to have a go for free, as well as providing a chance for people to register their promises for the ITV Year of Promise – which climaxes on 1 May, when the Roadshow will be in London.

www.freeserve.net/roadshow

Roadshow dates

April

7,8	Brunel Retail Park, Reading
11,12	Junction 9 Retail Park, Wednesbury, Birmingham
14,15	Sweet Briar Retail Park, Norwich
18,19	Hedge End Retail Park, Southampton
21,22	Marsh Mills Retail Park, Plymouth
24,25	Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock
27	Currys, Brent Cross
28	Hurlingham Retail Park, Fulham
29	Purley Way, Croydon
30	Royal Observatory, Greenwich

May

1	(ITV Day of Promise) Embankment, London

The mobile Net

Freeserve has gone mobile with a host of services which makes it even easier for you to communicate around town. You can get your e-mail on the move, allowing you to keep an eye on your messages while you're in transit or away from your computer. You can also connect to the Net using the latest technology WAP mobile phones. Simplified versions of Freeserve webpages can be accessed via your phone and navigated with the keypad. You can even bookmark your favourite sites. And this being Freeserve, you don't pay for the privilege of surfing – it's just the usual cost of a mobile call.

www.freeserve.net/mobileinternet

The women's guide to the worldwide Web

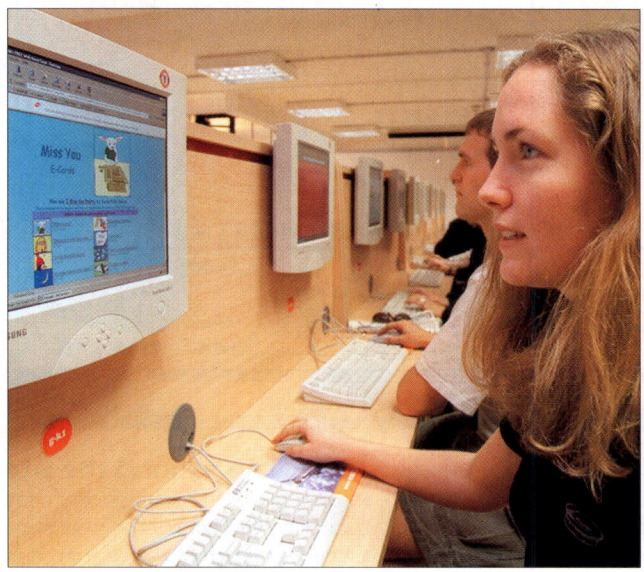
Freeserve's women's channel iCircle presents a how-to guide especially tailored for females

iCircle, the channel on Freeserve entirely designed for and dedicated to women, has continued to aid female empowerment on the Net. In a male-dominated environment, women have often been ignored or left without help on the Web.

That's all changed now. Whether you're new to the Web or you've been surfing for a while, women will be glad to read the women's guide to the Internet. Recently posted on the iCircle site at *www.icircle.co.uk*, the guide looks at several areas of Net behaviour which can be bamboozling to beginners and still slightly strange to those who've been surfing for months.

There are numerous subjects covered in depth. One of the first things necomers need to know is how to search for things on the Internet, and the guide explains how to do that through various search engines and directories.

Another great area of interest is meeting people, which the Net helps you to do through newsgroups, mailing lists, discussion groups and chat rooms. All these are explained and some fun places to meet people are suggested.



Then there's netiquette. Just because you're hiding behind a fake ID doesn't mean you can forget politeness on the Web, and the netiquette section of the iCircle guide helps you to get to grips with the dos and don'ts.

Some might be confused by smiley faces, emoticons and e-mail shorthand. If you don't know your BTWs from your FYIs, the iCircle guide will decode the abbreviations for you.

Finally, perhaps the biggest worry for most women – indeed, most people of either gender – is the subject of safety on the Internet. From shopping and sending credit card details to giving personal information to newsgroups, the iCircle guide allays fears while giving some simple protective advice on how to stay safe on the Net.

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It's the business!

Freeserve's Business Centre is the small business's best friend. You can get all manner of business supplies from office stationery and business cards to IT equipment, saving you time and money by ordering direct. Communications tools include conference calls, speechmail, messaging and the e.notifier to help you keep in touch. You can search for new recruits, download legal documents, and now you can join Marketplace – Freeserve's e-commerce solution for the smaller business. You can set up your store online and reach the vast potential of the Net on Freeserve – one of the UK's most-accessed websites!
www.freeserve.net/businesscentre

Happy hour mania

Freeserve's members were left hiccuping with delight after an exclusive three-hour promotion with Audiostreet and DVD Street in which all CDs and DVDs – already some of the cheapest on the Net – were slashed by a further 15 percent. The new Oasis album Standing on the Shoulder of Giants was available for only £8.49 including free delivery and the bestselling DVD The Matrix, starring Keanu Reeves, could have been yours for only £13.60. It wasn't just the big names that were popular. Other genres like classical, blues and jazz also sold very well. If you didn't take advantage, don't worry: the offer will be repeated soon, and Freeserve members will be notified via e-mail.

Eastern promise

Chocolate fans should keep an eye on Freeserve for a feast. Freeserve has teamed up with Jamba for a month-long jamboree which will provide three winners a week with a year's supply of chocolate. From Mars bars to Crunchies and Kit-Kats, the Easter extravaganza will keep chocoholics happy for a year!

Another great free competition on Freeserve this month sees a DVD player and several DVDs of a top British film being given away by Freeserve partner Popcorn. The top-notch Thomson player is the first prize, and the 10 winners will all receive copies of popular bittersweet cross-cultural comedy East Is East, set in 70s Salford.
www.freeserve.net

Retna; PA; Kobal

New-look Freeserve

When you log on to Freeserve from this month, you'll see a difference. The enhanced front page and channels will make them the perfect place to start exploring the Web and help make the most of your on-line experience.

Freeserve's in-house producers, designers and editorial team have been working to improve the layout and content to help you find your way around the service.

The new structure has been developed to help you find whatever you're looking for, from the latest album releases to financial information. The layout will make it easier for you to get to your favourite Freeserve areas, so you're fewer clicks away from wherever you want to go. You'll also notice a few new channels which have emerged as a result of the increasing amount of content which has been brought online.

And if you do just want to surf around, Freeserve have developed Europe's most powerful search engine. So you'll never miss what's going on in the real world because you were looking for it on the Web.

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Today

At the heart of the Freeserve redesign is the homepage, now restyled and renamed the Today channel. More than just a redesign, the Today channel links together all the best features of the Freeserve site.

The Today page is the perfect place to start your visit to Freeserve. Designed to help you make the most of your time on-line, the new homepage provides a lively mix of content and features as an excellent way in to the redesigned site.

Chat

Like a chinwag? Get your mouse pointed at Freeserve's newly refurbished Chat channel. Already popular among Freeserve users and casual surfers alike, the service is only going to get more popular after a number of improvements during the redesign.

Firstly, there are now more chatrooms – more than 20 of them covering all kinds of different topics. Whether it's films or football, fashion or food that gets you talking, you can now go to the right place for the latest gossip on the right subject. The fast-paced conversations in all the different chatrooms mean there's never a dull moment, whatever you want to discuss!

If ever you tire of a subject, you can easily change rooms and topics. If you fancy something a little more personal, you can indulge in one-to-one conversations with other users. If you fancy an entirely new subject, create your own chat room and invite friends to join you there. Or you can even interact with other users using 3D Chat!

New ways around the site

Most people like some things in life more than others. Maybe you're a sports buff but you're not big on shopping, whether on-line or off. Or perhaps you're into entertainment but can't stand sport. Now, with Freeserve's extensive and thoughtful redesign, you can stick to what you know and love by taking the new easy-to-follow pathways around the site.

Rather than one centralised chatroom, there are now more than 20 separate areas for discussion, with links directly from the appropriate channels. So if you've genned up on the football news you can head straight to the right chat room to discuss the latest news. Or if you've just heard the latest gossip on Leonardo DiCaprio you know where to find people to talk about it.

Besides chat, you can also now link straight to the requisite areas on Freeserve's Shopping channel. And if you're checking out the latest destination reports and ideas on Freeserve Travel, you can zip straight to the right travel agents on SHOP@freeserve to book your place on the plane. After all, it's much easier to get around with Freeserve!

Shopping

You no longer have to brave the High Street crowds – you can do it all from the warmth and comfort of your front room with Freeserve's Shopping facilities. Pick up great bargains on everything from books and bikes to lava lamps and adventure holidays. Besides SHOP@freeserve, there's also Marketplace for specialist, hand-crafted and niche goods.

What's happening

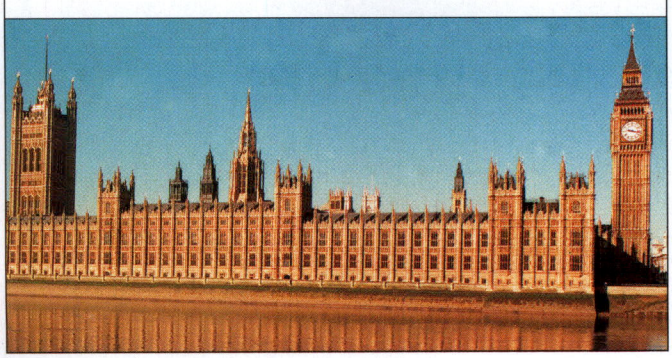
Often, websites don't keep you informed about the latest additions to their pages. That's not the case on Freeserve. There will be short snippets of juicy information to let you know what's going on around the site on all the various channels.

This will be the place to come to for content specifically tailored for events like Father's Day, as well as for all the latest and greatest Freeserve offers.

And unlike on many sites, these snippets will be regularly updates, so you know you're getting entirely fresh content. You need never be unaware of exciting new developments!

News feed

On some websites, news is pushed into a corner and rendered unimportant. Not so on the newly redesigned Freeserve site. Whatever the time of day or night, key news items will be pulled to the front of the site so you can keep an eye on the latest developments. Should you want the full lowdown, of course, you could go to the News channel for more information, but now with Freeserve you can keep an eye on the headlines without having to search them out.



Auctions

You don't have to sit in a dusty room lifting your finger or subtly touching your hat-brim any more to enjoy the auction experience. With the Freeserve Auction channel you can bid on anything and everything or track down an elusive gift with a difference. Bag your own bargains on-line with Freeserve.

fsmail

Subscribers to fsmail – another completely chargeless service from Freeserve – will find it much easier to access their mail. You can now log directly in to your Web-based e-mail service from the redesigned Freeserve homepage.

Are you into Web-based mail yet? Besides the unlimited number of e-mail addresses each Freeserve member can have ending in freeserve.co.uk, fsbusiness.co.uk or fsnet.co.uk, there's also fsmail (*www.fsmail.net*). Why would anyone want another e-mail address? Because Web-based e-mail can be accessed from any computer connected to the Internet, rather than the one on which the account was set up – usually at home.

With fsmail, you can check your e-mail messages whether you're at work, on holiday, in a cybercafé or at a friend's. Anyone can register whether they're a Freeserve member or not, although members can use their FSmail account to collect messages from their 'home' account at freeserve.co.uk, fsbusiness.co.uk or fsnet.co.uk.

Building communities

A key concept of the redesign is to link people together into communities. These communities will feature chat – including 3D chat – to help you to get to know other Freeserve users' likes and dislikes. But that's not all…

There will also be message boards for you to have your say and post your thoughts. You can build your own Web page on Freeserve to tell the world about yourself. And there'll even be a celebrity chat area with stars from the world of stage and screen popping in to say hello. Come and join the Freeserve community!

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Image Bank; PA

Hitting the Heights

Members of the Territorial Army are climbing the highest mountain in the world in aid of charity, and Freeserve is tracking them all the way at *www.freeserve.net/everest*

Climbing the highest mountain on the planet is a worthy aim at any time; when it's in aid of charity, so much the better. As you read this, a team of British Territorial Army soldiers are attempting to do just that – and Freeserve is backing them all the way, covering the expedition on a specially-constructed website.

The Everest expedition had first been mooted by Major Ian Anderson and Major Rob Facer over a pint of bitter. However, when Rob's father began to suffer from brain cancer, Ian and Rob had the inspiration they needed to attempt an ascent – and raise money for the Cancer Research Campaign into the bargain.

As if simply climbing Everest isn't enough of a task, the 12-strong team will be attempting to conquer the world's most famous peak by its toughest route, the North Ridge. As well as being a fearsomely difficult route, it's one which is shrouded in mystery. In 1924, almost 30 years before the mountain was climbed for the first time by Sir Edmund Hillary and sherpa Tenzing Norgay, George Leigh Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared a short distance from the summit; debate has raged ever since as to whether the duo bested the mountain or perished on the way. Few traces have ever been found, and they remain inconclusive.

While Everest is still a dangerous mountain, the team members have trained extensively for the challenge. There are no novices on the team – indeed one member, L/Cpl. Dom Faulkner, has already travelled from K2 to Everest base camp by mountain bike! – and formal preparation has included extensive training in the Alps.

Unlike Mallory and Irvine, one thing the mountaineers need not fear is losing contact. For Freeserve is following the expedition all the way to the top, linking the team to the folks back home via e-mail. Diary reports will be fed back to the site by the mountaineers as they climb, both in text form and as audio files. It's also hoped to send pictures to the website so observers can track their progress.

ITINERARY

March

13	Advance party to Nepal
20	Main party to Nepal
22	By road to Zangmu; acclimatise
24	By road to Nyalam; acclimatise
27	By road to Tingri; acclimatise
29	By road to Shegar; acclimatise

April

1	Arrive base camp
1-7	Climbers acclimatise, base camp team sets up interim camp and Advanced Base Camp (ABC)
7-12	Climbers move to ABC
12-mid-May	Climbers establish fixed lines and stores to Camp V

May

Mid-May onwards	Summit attempts

THE TEAM

Team Leader – Major Ian Anderson
Deputy Team Leader – Major Rob Facer
Medical Support –
L/Cpl. Tom Carrell; Tpr. Jerry Fletcher
Lead Climbing Team –
L/Cpl. Dom Faulkner; Tpr. Lionel Fairweather; S/Sgt. Mark James; WO1 Mick Kenny; S/Sgt. Dan White
Base Camp Support Team –
Jon Havens; Seamus Ryan; John Griffiths
There will also be three high-altitude sherpas joining the climbing team.

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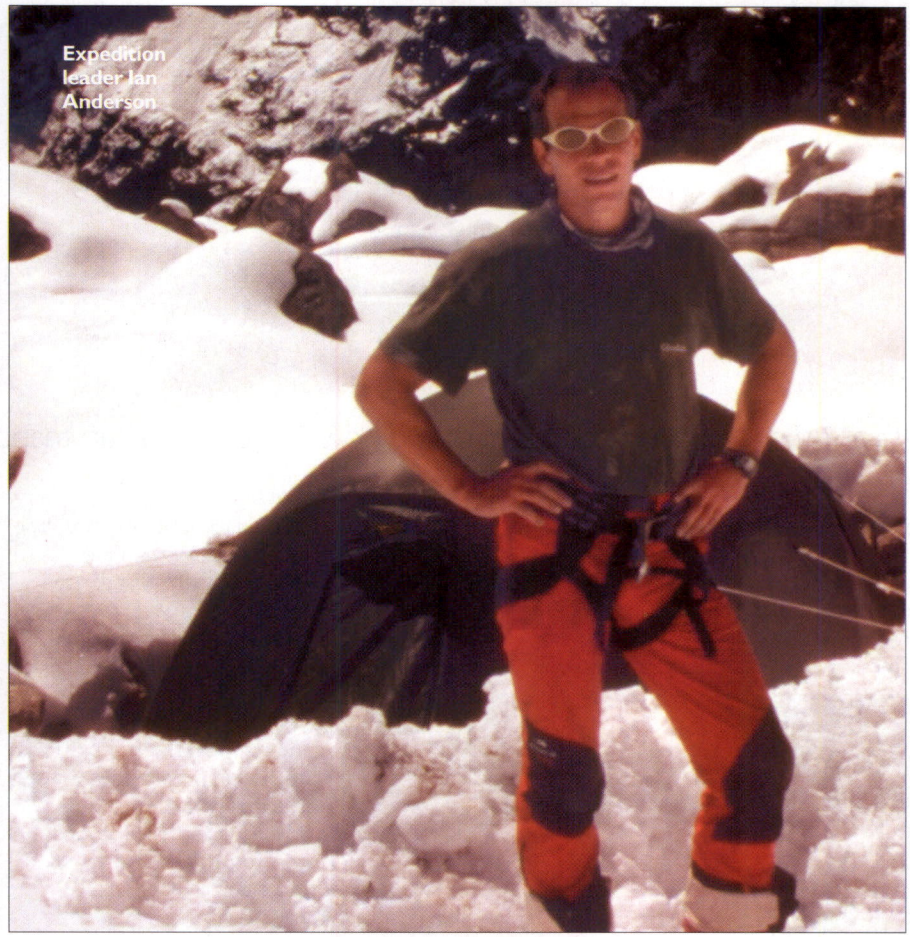

Expedition leader Ian Anderson

Interview with Major Ian Anderson – Expedition Leader, Everest 2000

When did you first decide to attempt this climb?
The allure of Everest is ever-present for many mountaineers. Everest holds a fascination for climbers for all sorts of reasons, not the least the mystery surrounding Mallory and Irvine. The whole expedition slipped into reality about two years ago.

How did the idea for the attempt come about, and why?
Rob Facer and I started discussing the possibility of making the dream a reality about three years ago. Like most ideas in mountaineering it came about over a pint of bitter.

When did the team start preparing for the expedition, and how?
The team was selected in April 1999. Formal preparation has included training in Scotland, the Alps, and the Himalayas. Individual preparation varies; some of the team have had cardio-vascular training regimes, others have spent as much time as possible climbing.

What are the major challenges and setbacks you have encountered so far?
A major challenge facing any expedition is raising funds, but we have been able to afford our sponsors a powerful media platform. At the same time we have had to manage delicate systems of international protocol, but we have established an excellent relationship with the Chinese Mountaineering Authority.

How long does the climb take and what will be the major challenges?
We expect to be on the mountain for about two months. The road from Kathmandu to Base Camp may be blocked by avalanche or mud slide. The climbing will include dangers from crevasse, avalanche and serac fall. The weather will be bitterly cold and there is the ever-present threat of a storm. But our major challenge is the greatest enemy to mountaineers: altitude sickness.

Have any of the team climbed Everest before?
One team member has climbed on Everest before, reaching 8000 metres in Winter. Four of the team have been to above 7000 metres and the rest have all climbed to above 6000 metres.

Why do you think people still want to climb Everest?
It may sound trite, but if you have to ask the question you will never understand the answer.

Auction Stations

It's all go on fsauctions. Read on to find how you can have fun snapping up bargains on Freeserve

What am I bid...?

How much would you bid for a ticket to watch England play in the Six Nations Championship, a dream holiday to Barbados, a classic sports car sports car or a rare beanie baby? All these items have been 'under the hammer' this year on Freeserve's on-line auction site, fsauctions (*www.fsauctions.co.uk*).

Whether you're hunting for a bargain, looking for a last-minute treat or searching for a collectible item, you'll find them all under one roof at fsauctions. Bidding is great fun, very easy and you enjoy the peace of mind you would expect from Freeserve. Simply visit the site, find something you want to buy, complete the simple registration process and make your bid. If you are out-bid, jump in again with a better offer. Maybe you win; maybe the item goes beyond what you are prepared to pay. That's all part of the fun.

Who'll start me at £1...?

This month, fsauctions introduces its weekly '£1 NO RESERVE' items. Each week you will have the chance to bid on items with an opening bid starting at just £1 and with absolutely no reserve! Visit the site to find out what's on offer each week. You won't be disappointed. Items continue to be put up for auction at a rate of over 10,000 per week. There's no charge for listing an item for sale. Anyone can do it and private sellers can go straight on-line and enter an item for auction in minutes. fsauctions takes a small commission – but only when your item sells.

Freeserve 'auctioneer' Simon Danciger has the job of increasing the number of items up for auction. According to Simon, 'private sellers have already discovered the benefits of listing their items on-line. Now businesses are also catching on to the opportunity auctions present for shifting stock, which means there are always fantastic deals on the site.'

So, whether you are buying or selling, fsauctions is the place where you will find it all. As it says on the site, 'we've got the lot'.

On these two pages you'll find a few examples of the bargains on offer, but whether these items tickle your fancy or not, head to fsauctions – 10,000 items can't be wrong!

www.fsauctions.co.uk

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APPLIANCES

fsauctions has struck a deal with major domestic appliance manufacturers Hotpoint, Canon and Creda. Now you can log on and peruse an extensive collection of domestic appliances available for fantastic prices! So anyone thinking of buying a domestic appliance in April should certainly check out fsauctions to see what's on offer. Items will be constantly changing so keep popping back regularly to see the latest deals.

BIKES

Summer's coming, which is great news for those who like the great outdoors but not the cold. You can get around and keep fit at the same time by buying a bike. At any time on fsauctions there will be anything up to a hundred bikes on offer. Many are mountain bikes, but there are also racers and BMXs for all the family. With top brands, covering a wide range of specifications, there's something to suit all budgets.

CHOCOLATES

Belgian chocolates are renowned as some of the nicest in the world, and now on fsauctions there are some chocolates with a hidden delight which will leave a lovely taste in the mouth. On opening a mouth-watering 500g selection of delicious beautifully presented Belgian chocolates, you will find two free return tickets to Brussels with Virgin Express, flying from either Heathrow or Stansted.

COLLECTORS

Beanies: small, cute, soft and very collectable, and on-line auctions are always packed full of them. The very nature of Beanies makes them collectable; the original beanies get retired or changed, and it becomes addictive as collections near completion. From Babies to Buddies and Bears to the new theme Kids. Whether you want to start your collection or find the missing one, check out fsauctions!

Playground of the rich and famous

MONACO

Fancy flying to Monaco to watch the thrills and spills of the Formula 1 Grand Prix? One of the offers on fsauctions is a Package Day Trip to the Monaco Grand Prix on June 4.

As usual with Freeserve, and even more so with fsauctions, it's cheaper than you'd expect. The bidding opens £100 below the value of the package – so there's a chance for F1 fans to get a real bargain.

The Monaco 2000 Grand Prix must be the ultimate spectacular for Formula 1 fans wishing to treat themselves to a special event to mark the millennium year. The most glamorous race in the F1 calendar, set in the wealthy principality beside a marina with yachts the size of houses, attracts a galaxy of stars who mingle with up to 120,000 fans around Casino Square, the Swimming Pool and Secteur Rocher to watch the fastest race in the world. The excitement is electrifying as the drivers white-knuckle ride 78 times around a 2.092 mile circuit. The first-gear hairpins at Loews and Rascasse, the Nouvelle Chicane and the famous tunnel under the casino present some of the toughest challenges in Formula 1. And for an added thrill, being so close to the track means that the decibel level is deafening as the cars roar past you.

The glitz, the glamour, the thrills, the spills and the sheer high-octane excitement all set in the heart of gregarious and trendy Monaco. This is the perfect way to kick start your millennium in pole position. Flight departs from either London Stansted or Manchester at 0600hrs and will arrive at Nice airport at 0930hrs. On arrival at Nice airport coaches will transfer you the 16 miles to Monaco. After the race ends you will have a few hours to enjoy the unique atmosphere in Monaco at F1 time. You might like to sample the high life with a few drinks or a meal, a visit to the casino or stroll around the yacht-packed harbour.

Coach transfers will depart Monaco at 2030hrs for your return journey to Nice airport. Flights depart Nice airport at 2300hrs to arrive at London Stansted at 2350hrs or Manchester at 0030hrs.

The package includes return flights , transfers , airport taxes and a race ticket in the popular Secteur Rocher standing area – which benefits from the presence of a large TV screen opposite so you can follow the action on the rest of the track. It's an ideal package with which to experience the flavour of this unique event.

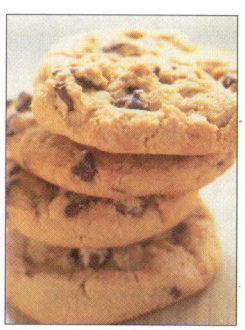
www.fsauctions.co.uk

Image Bank; World Pictures; LAT

Computer cookies aren't monsters

Getting a taste for cookies

You might have heard a lot about cookies and wondered what on earth they're all about. Let Freeserve put your mind at rest with these answers.



Do you find your surfing is being hampered by your browser asking you about cookies, making you wander off to the kitchen feeling hungry and confused? Read on to discover that far from being sweetened biscuits, cookies are actually useful little pieces of software which can save you time...

•So what are cookies?

A cookie is a message given to a Web browser by a website. The browser stores the message as a text file on your computer. The cookie then sends an identifying message back to the site each time that browser requests a page from the server.

•What do they do?

Cookies are used to identify users, and possibly to prepare customised Web pages for them. When you enter a website using cookies, you may be asked to fill out a form providing such information as your name and interests. This information is packaged into a cookie and sent to your Net browser, which stores it for later use. The next time you go to the same Web site, your browser will send the cookie to the Web site. The site can use this information to present you with customised pages. So, for example, instead of seeing just a generic welcome page you might see a welcome page with your name on it.

•Are cookies dangerous for my computer, like a virus?

No, cookies are simple short snippets of information. They are not applications or programs which can make changes to your computer.

•Is it not just Big Brother noseying around my hard drive?

That all depends on whether you're letting him. On the Internet, you are only as anonymous as you want to be; revealing any kind of personal information opens the door for that

powered by

free serve

www.freeserve.net

information to be spread. Cookies themselves do not gather that data, although theoretically they could be used as a tracking device to help the people who are gathering that information. As information is gathered about you, it is associated with the value they keep in your cookie. The only way that information could end up in a cookie is if you explicitly provide it to a site and that site saves it to a cookie.

•Do they clog up my hard drive?

Not at all. Cookies are always very small files, usually just a few characters and generally less than 1Kb in size. Thousands of cookies take up little more than a few kilobytes of storage space.

•Can they be turned off or deleted from my hard drive? If so, how?

Netscape Navigator stores all its cookies in a text file called cookies.txt in its program folder; Internet Explorer stores each cookie as a separate text file in the windows/cookies folder. Both browsers allow you to remove existing cookies using their configuration options, should you wish to. Refer to your browser help files for more details.

•Can I set my browser to reject cookies?

Yes, both Explorer and Navigator allow cookie support to be disabled. However, before you rush off to disable cookies, consider that this means you could be missing out on a lot of the functionality of many leading websites. Cookies often enable a more interactive and richer experience of websites.

•Is there somewhere I can find out more about cookies?

Sure. There are a number of good sites which give more detailed technical information about cookie technology and how they are used. If you have your own website and are interested in employing cookies yourself, you can also find out how to use them to analyse user activity and create custom pages for visitors. Try *www.cookiecentral.com.*

•Finally, why are they called cookies?

'Cookie' is a long-established term in software engineering which predates the advent of the Internet, and according to the dictionary is used when describing 'an opaque piece of data held by an intermediary'. What all that lot means is far beyond what you need to know about their uses in browsers!

free serve www.freeserve.net/support

On-line help

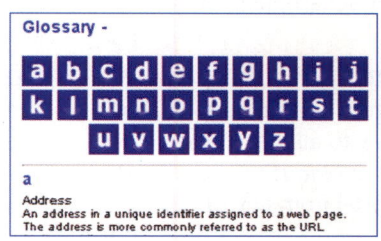
We've put together an awesome set of answers for all your technical queries. It's available on our website – and it's free!

What are my options?

If you're new to the Net, Freeserve is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get on-line. We've designed the help section on the Freeserve website so you can turn to Freeserve and get a straight answer, straight away. There's a complete content guide, a full alphabetical index of topics and a find function – all designed to take you straight to the answer you need. Separate sections deal with everything you need to know to avoid problems before set-up, and tell you what to expect as you begin to install the software from the CD-ROM onto your machine. It really is that simple!

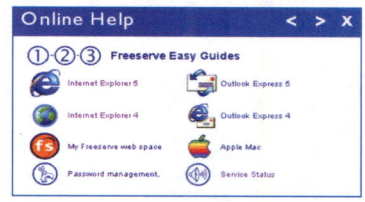
How does on-line help work?

It's easy! There are four main sources of information. Read through the descriptions below and you'll soon see which best suits the type of query you have. Then connect to Freeserve, visit the help section and get all your questions answered quickly.



The Glossary

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, turn to our glossary first. It's more than likely to be there.



The Easy Guides

If there's an area of your Net use that is causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a complete solution. You'll find answers sorted by subject.

Questions and Answers

If there's a specific question you need answered, turn to our Q&A section for rapid help. First select the general area from our drop-down menu, then a specific question. You may find your question has already been answered.

Contacts

If you still need help, you can e-mail our support staff. They're the same people who staff our phone helpdesks, and they're trained to deal with your queries. Direct e-mail addresses are listed on the contacts page. They'll be happy to help you!

How do I find answers on the CD?

Alternatively, there's also a fully comprehensive Help feature on the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM. When you put the CD in your machine you'll be given four options. The help button takes you to a comprehensive set of instructions to enable you to get on-line with Freeserve.

Phone-line help

Our experts are on call 24 hours a day

Using Freeserve's on-line help couldn't be simpler, but from time to time you might have a direct question for one of our experts. To help you get the most out of your connection, Freeserve's Technical Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Make sure you've consulted our on-line help before you call, as you may find we've already answered your question. If not, our trained staff can provide you with instant answers in plain English on a range of Net subjects. Calls cost 50p per minute.

PC Support 0906 2517517 Mac 0906 7234000

Scope; Image Bank

The UK's No1 for the Internet and it's easy to see why

NO SUBSCRIPTION
You can explore whatever you want, whenever you want, without worrying about monthly subscription charges.

THE BEST PORTAL
Our homepage is second to none, and is your gateway to all that Freeserve has to offer. *Internet Magazine* recently rated it "the best portal from any UK ISP."

MORE TO DISCOVER
Over 30 channels including news, sport, travel, shopping, business, women's interest and much, much more - there's something for everyone.

FREE E-MAIL YOU CAN ACCESS ANYWHERE
Freeserve members can now send and receive* e-mails even when away from home. With access through any PC, anywhere in the world with **fs**mail.

free serve

www.freeserve.net

Sign up on-line or pick up a free CD at any branch of

Dixons PC WORLD THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE Currys The Link @jakarta

*Internet access is normally subject to standard call rates

stepbystep

Email sorted; browsers explained; the latest digital cameras... Plus, we tell you what to do with all that free Web space and how to use the Net in place of a phone

Your technical problems well sorted with our easy-to-follow guide to the Net

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a huge global network of computers, with literally millions of machines connected together across the planet.

HOW DO I GET ON IT?

All you really need is a computer, a modem, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a telephone line.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

1 **Surf the Worldwide Web.**
2 Send someone an email.
3 **Take part in a newsgroup discussion.**
4 Make friends and get chatting with people from all over the world.

CONTENTS

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Use our easy-to-follow guide to find the right one for you

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The latest digital cameras brought into focus

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It's given to you, so you might as well use it

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Reduce call charges by using the Internet as your phone

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Step-by-step guide to setting up Outlook Express

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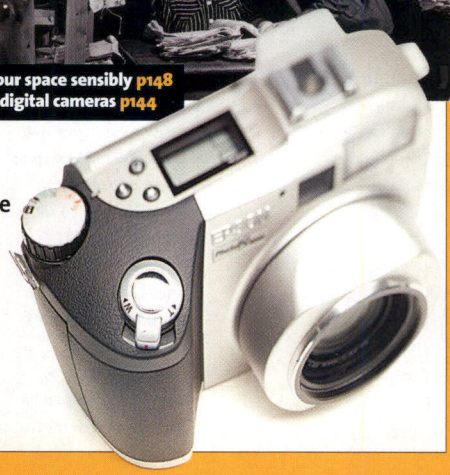

What Service Provider?

May 2000 Let *the net* take you by the hand and guide you through the vast and confusing world of Internet Service Providers...

What is an ISP?

An Internet service provider, or ISP, is a company that connects you to the Internet. All you need do is exploit the provider's permanent Net connection by connecting to it.

Get the best ISP deal

Right now, literally hundreds of ISPs are vying for your business – which is great news for consumers. But to help you make a truly informed decision, we've tested the best service providers on the market.

Below, you'll find our ratings for the current crop of the best ISPs looking to connect you. There are several companies that are now offering completely free access – and that includes the price of the phone call that connects you to the Internet. LocalTel pioneered this service back in the spring with the launch of Screaming.Net. Since then several companies have started to offer free calls to the Net at certain times of the day. CallNeto800 has also launched and is offering completely free access at any time of the day. This new breed of ISP is set to change the landscape of Net access in the UK, as several other service providers investigate the possibility of offering completely free access in a bid to keep up with new trends. In other words, the future couldn't be brighter for Net consumers, as the price of getting online continues to go down.

Call costs

It's worth checking how much you'll be paying for the phone calls that connect you to the Net. Apart from the new breed of free services, nearly every ISP charges local call rates. For BT customers, this means 4p/min on weekdays between 8am-6pm; 1.5p/min during off-peak times, and 1p/min at the weekend. Check with your phone company.

Speeding up

To say things are only going to get faster is an understatement. BT is currently trialling ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). It will offer an 'always on' high speed connection to the Internet with data delivery speeds of 10-40 times a conventional modem. At the moment, most modems operate at 56kbps (kilobits per second) or less. For more info see ***www.bt.com/adsl/***

BEGINNER'S TIP

Put the phone number you use to dial up to the Internet on your BT Friends and Family list.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Set up several free accounts. If for any reason you cannot connect to one provider, simply try another one. There's no limit to how many accounts you have.

ADVANCED TIP

Consider installing an extra phone line. It means you can have one for the phone and one for your modem, so you can use the Internet as much as you like.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Aardvaak **FREE**	***www.aardvaak.co.uk***	London-based ISP which promises no banner advertising	Unlimited
AngliaNet Limited	***www.anglianet.co.uk***	Dial-up, web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
AOL	***www.aol.co.uk***	A large ISP offering proprietary software to try to make connecting painless	Unlimited
Aviators Network	***www.aviators.net***	An ISP designed with aircraft-related content for the pilot and the enthusiast	Unlimited
BIGWIG **FREE**	***www.bigwig.net***	Clear and well-presented – free Internet access in a complete package	Unlimited
BREATHE **FREE**	***www.breathe.co.uk***	Well-established free ISP. Easy-to-use site design	Unlimited
Btclick.com **FREE**	***www.btclick.com***	The free Internet service from BT	Unlimited
BT Internet	***www.btinternet.com***	Another Internet arm of BT, offering a full access package	Unlimited
Bun **FREE**	***www.bun.com***	The free ISP offering of *The Sun* newspaper	Unlimited
Cable and Wireless Lite **FREE**	***www.cwcom.net***	Free Net access for CW customers	Unlimited
CALLNET **FREE**	***www.callnetuk.com***	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced Web-based services	Unlimited
CIX	***www.cix.co.uk***	The Compulink Information eXchange. Provides Internet conferencing accounts	Unlimited
ClaraNET Ltd	***www.clara.net***	Subscription based ISP with a range of account options to suit any needs	Unlimited
Compuserve	***www.compuserve.com***	Long-standing ISP which offers proprietary software to aid ease-of-use and level of service	Unlimited
Connect Free **FREE**	***www.connectfree.net***	One of the very first free ISPs	Unlimited
CYBERphile Internet	***www.cyberphile.co.uk***	Business-oriented, Midlands-based provider. Specialists in leased lines, LANs, firewalls, ISDN etc	Unlimited
Dabsol **FREE**	***www.dabsol.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Demon Internet	***www.demon.co.uk***	The UK's original dial-up account today aspires to be the industry's 'Premium' service	Unlimited
Direct Connection	***www.dircon.net***	Home and business ISP offering global roaming among their services	Unlimited
Easynet Ltd	***www.easynet.net***	Subscription based dial-up service. Winner of best European ISP at this year's ISPA awards	Unlimited
EidosNet **FREE**	***www.eidosnet.co.uk***	EidosNet is brought to you by Eidos, publishers of *Tomb Raider* and other great games	Unlimited
Enterprise plc	***www.enterprise.net***	Subscription based ISP with a host of features including game and news servers	Unlimited
F9 Free **FREE**	***www.f9.net.uk***	Free ISP from previously subscription-only service Force 9	Unlimited
Firstnet Services Ltd	***www.firstnet.co.uk***	Business Internet solution provider	Unlimited
FirstWeb	***www.first-web.co.uk***	ISP based in Middlesex. Provides Internet solutions for businesses	Unlimited
Free Internet **FREE**	***www.free-internet.co.uk***	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
FREENET **FREE**	***www.freenet.co.uk***	More free access with a gaming bias. Online auto sign-up and newsgroups add to the interest	Unlimited
Free Online **FREE**	***www.free-online.net***	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	Unlimited
Freeserve **FREE**	***www.freeserve.net***	Free provider from the Dixons Group of companies	Unlimited

what service provider?

ISPs explained Using our easy-to-follow guide

FREE CONNECTIONS
There are now many companies that will get you on to the Internet without charging a subscription fee – the only thing you pay for is the price of the phone call that connects you.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Despite the plethora of free ISPs springing up, there are still many which charge a flat monthly fee. These generally offer free technical support; most free ISPs charge by the minute.

CONTENT PROVIDERS
Content providers also charge to get you online, but provide exclusive content to members, and a sense of 'community'.

How the tables work

Description
A brief description of the services offered by the ISP in question.

Type of service
Tells you whether there is any restriction on how often you can use the Internet.

Phone number
The number to ring if you want to sign up.

Email addresses
Some service providers give you only one email address, others provide as many as you want.

Content
Outlines whether the service provider in question provides its own content and whether it is exclusive to its users.

Macintosh support
Not all service providers offer software and technical support for Macs, preferring to concentrate on PCs – so be sure to check this column out if you're an Apple user.

Web space
If you are interested in designing your own Web page, most Internet Service Providers will give you space to store it on. 2Mb should be enough for most people's requirements.

Set-up fee
Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.

Monthly charge
If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set amount per month to be online.

Phone support charges
Technical support is great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune to benefit from it. Find out how much free service providers charge per minute for calls to their technical support desks.

Telephone support hours
The hours when the technical support desk will be open to take your calls.

Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you is correct. The publishers of *the Net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any Internet service provider that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme should contact eval@netbasics.com **For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at *www.netbasics.com*.**

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
Sign up online	1	None	No	0	0	0	Unavailable	n/a
01473 211922	1	None	Yes	5Mb	None	11.75	Mobile	9-5 M-F, 8-9 S-S
0800 3765432	5	Massive amount of content	Yes	10Mb	0	9.99	Free	8-10.30M-F 9-9.30S-S
0700 2842867	1	'Flightalogue' lists a host of goodies	No	15Mb	0	11.75	Standard	9-9 7 days
01509 651451	5	None	No	15 Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	9-9 M-F, 10-8 S-S
0870 6006006	5	Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 800001	Unlimited	From Excite	Yes	0	0	0	50p per minute	8-12 Midnight
0800 800001	5	None	Yes	10Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0845 3063636	5	Online dating, Bunshopping, *The Sun* online etc	Yes	25Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 0923 001	5	Channels and account administration	No	20 Mb	0	0	National	24/7
0171 3358300	5	Chat servers, channels, services, Web news	Yes	20Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
0845 3555050	Unlimited	None	Yes	30Mb	0	17.61	Local call	9-10 M-F, 12-6 S-S
0800 3582828	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	8.99	Free	24/7
0990 000200	5	A large range of channels and a search engine	No	10Mb	0	16.95	National	8-12 Midnight
SIgn up online	Unlimited	Channel-based content provided by Virgin	No	Unlimited	0	0	Unavailable	24/7
01543 454840	1	None	Yes	0.1Mb	0	11.74	Standard	8.30-6 M-F
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	Unlimited	0	0	Metered	24/7
0181 3711234	Unlimited	None	Yes	20Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0800 0720000	Unlimited	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	20Mb	0	13.50	Local	9-9 7days
0171 6814444	Unlimited	None	Yes	2Mb	0	11.99	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01624 677666	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	11.75	Local	9-10 M-F 10-4 S-S
0800 0737800	Unlimited	None	Yes	15Mb	0	0	National	7-11, 7 Days
0113 294 4224	Unlimited	Search engines and support	Yes	10Mb	0	12.50	Local	Business hours
0870 7409223	4	None	No	5Mb	0	7.73	Local	24/7
Sign up online	1	Newsgroups and IE5 download	No	10Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
01329 511611	Unlimited	Games links and independent status	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National rates	9-6 7 days
0870 7060504	5	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	Premium rate	24/7
0990 500049	Unlimited	Extensive channel based content	Yes	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Free to You **FREE**	***www.free2you.co.uk***	No-frills free ISP with online sign-up	Unlimited
Freewire **FREE**	***www.freewire.net***	Free ISP with no sign-up requirements	Unlimited
Freezone **FREE**	***www.freezone.co.uk***	A free ISP offering the usual package in a smart format	Unlimited
Gateway 2000 **FREE**	***www.ukgateway.net***	An ISP service from the hardware retailers of the same name. Packaged with Gateway computers	Unlimited
Go Free **FREE**	***www.gofree.co.uk***	Free ISP offering online sign-up, complete with helpline	Unlimited
IC24 **FREE**	***www.ic24.net***	The free ISP service of Mirror Group Newspapers	Unlimited
LineOne **FREE**	***www.lineone.net***	BT's Internet service has recently dropped its subscription charge	Unlimited
London Web Comm Ltd	***www.londonweb.net***	An emphasis on corporate clientele. Useful London Local Directory	Unlimited
Netcom	***www.netcom.net.uk***	A comprehensive range of services to the home and business user	Unlimited
Paradise Internet Network Service	***www.pins.co.uk***	Paradise Internet is a subscription provider which also authors software	Unlimited
Screaming.net **FREE**	***www.screaming.net***	The pioneer of the free access/free phone call model	Unlimited
Smart One **FREE**	***www.smartone.co.uk***	A free, bright ISP with plenty of fun content and links	Unlimited
Sonnet Internet Ltd	***www.sonnet.co.uk***	Packages and solutions for the private and business user	Unlimited
This is it! **FREE**	***www.thisisit.co.uk***	End-user targeted free ISP	Unlimited
UK Fantastic **FREE**	***www.ukfantastic.net***	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	Unlimited
UK Online Ltd **FREE**	***www.ukonline.co.uk***	A family-friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware and gaming software. Sign up online	Unlimited
UK People **FREE**	***www.ukpeople.net***	Free ISP, online chat, set-up and help	Unlimited
Virgin Net **FREE**	***www.virgin.net***	The long-standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	Unlimited
Which? Online	***www.which.net***	A free ISP from the eponymous consumer affairs magazine	Unlimited
Wireplay Internet **FREE**	***www.wireplay.com***	Wireplay is an online games network offering access to Intranet-based fast games servers	Unlimited
X-Stream Network **FREE**	***www.x-stream.com***	Offers enhanced member services, such as occasional free phone calls to the Net	Unlimited

Network performance

May 2000

Independent testing carried out by NetBasics – contact eval@netbasics.com

We test the best ISPs in the country for the reliability and speed of their connection. The tests are conducted in three areas and a star rating is given indicative of their performance. The three areas of testing are:

VARIATION IN MODEM SPEED

This is a gauge to measure whether you get a constant speed once a modem connects to an ISP. ISPs should offer a constant speed and we measure any variation. Each ISP starts with 100 percent and loses position the greater the variance in connection. This is achieved by comparison so that no ISP is favoured above others.

VARIATION IN TIME TO CONNECT

This section of the test measures the variation in how long it takes to get connected to your ISP. The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and then physically connecting.

AVAILABILITY

There's nothing more frustrating than dialling your ISP and finding you can't actually get through and on to the Net. This area measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, either through the engaged tone, or if it does not respond correctly to modem signals. The results are combined into a single reading giving us a fair way to chart ISPs based on relevant aspects of their dial-in service. The results shown in the chart are based on a sample of 50 ISPs from ongoing tests.

FIRSTNET Services Limited

1	Firstnet	★★★★★	26	Dabsol	★★★★
2	Netcom	★★★★★	27	Bun	★★★
3	Cyberphile	★★★★★	28	Easynet	★★★
4	AngliaNet	★★★★★	29	Go Free	★★★
5	Enterprise	★★★★★	30	Eisdosnet	★★★
6	Smart One	★★★★★	31	Compuserve	★★★
7	Wireplay	★★★★★	32	Breathe	★★★
8	BT Internet	★★★★★	33	AOL	★★★
9	LineOne	★★★★★	34	Virgin Net	★★★
10	Direct Connection	★★★★★	35	Claranet	★★★
11	Aviator's Network	★★★★★	36	UK Online	★★★
12	Sonnet Internet	★★★★★	37	X-Stream Network	★★★
13	London Web	★★★★★	38	Demon Internet	★★★
14	Callnet	★★★★★	39	Screaming.net	★★★
15	Freewire	★★★★★	40	Which? Online	★★
16	Gateway 2000	★★★★★	41	CIX	★★
17	Free Internet	★★★★★	42	Cable and Wireless	★★
18	Paradise Internet	★★★★	43	Freezone	★★
19	This Is It!	★★★★	44	IC24	★★
20	F9 Free	★★★★	45	Connect Free	★★
21	Btclick.com	★★★★	46	UK People	★★
22	Free Online	★★★★	47	Aardvark	★★
23	Freenet	★★★★	48	UK Fantastic	★★
24	Freeserve	★★★★	49	Bigwig	★★
25	Free To You	★★★★	50	First Web	★★

what service provider?

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
Sign up online	Unlimited	Search engine page and technical support	No	10Mb	0	0	Available soon	n/a
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	50Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 7441111	Unlimited	On-site search engine access	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
At Gateway Stores	Unlimited	None	No	10Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
0870 9090262	Unlimited	Channel based content with news, sport, weather	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 111210	5	News, shopping, sport, community etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	8-Midnight M-Sa
0181 3494500	3	None	Yes	5Mb	17.63	14.68	Standard	9-9 M-Sa
0870 5668008	20	A business oriented portal site	Yes	25Mb	0	14.95	National	24/7
01256 414863	1	None	Yes	2Mb	17.63	9.40	National	11-7 M-F
Sign up at Tempo	Unlimited	Travel, entertainment, business, sport etc	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
08700 774411	1	Lots of links	No	25Mb	0	0	Metered	9-6 M-S, 10-5 Sun
0171 8912000	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	12.50	National	9-9 M-S
0906 9124000	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
01749 333333	1	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	An online community, games and downloads	No	5Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0500 558800	5	Several Virgin channels	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0645 830240	1	Online shopping and consumer affairs content	Yes	2Mb	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7
0845 757 7577	0	Games news, games chat, games add-ons	No	0	0	0	50p per minute	12pm-12 am, 7 days
0870 7306466	1	Chat, news, lifestyle, shopping, etc	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

ISP NEWS IN BRIEF All the service provider news you need

Freeserve scoops industry award

Pioneering free Internet service provider Freeserve was named Best Consumer ISP at the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) industry awards. The ISPA (***www.ispa.org.uk***) was established in 1995 to represent ISPs and promote the UK Internet industry. Other winners were:

BEST CONSUMER ISP
FREESERVE
www.freeserve.net

BEST VALUE ISP
STRAYDUCK
www.strayduck.com

BEST E-COMMERCE SERVICE OFFERED BY AN ISP
NETBANX
www.netinvest.co.uk/ncr/netbanx

BEST ISP PRODUCT
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BEST BUSINESS SERVICE
NETCOM INTERNET
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www.ocmuk.com

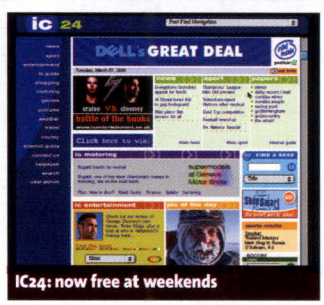
BEST EUROPEAN ISP
UUNET
www.uk.uu.net

BEST BUSINESS ISP
PLANET ONLINE
www.theplanet.net

BEST ISP WEB SITE
FREENETNAME
www.freenetname.co.uk

BEST CONSUMER CUSTOMER SERVICE
TOTALISE
www.totalise.net

Freeserve: proved popular with its peers since its launch last year



IC24: now free at weekends

Another 24 hours

IC24 has extended its 0800 free access plan even further. Originally it was offering free calls to the Net on Sundays until Christmas. It extended that offer indefinitely and has now announced that users can also dial up for free on Saturdays as well.
www.ic24.co.uk

Go Telewest

Telewest has introduced a broadband cable Internet access service. Although it will only be available in one region to start with, it is expected Telewest will roll the service out in other parts of the country throughout the year. Telewest will offer an unmetered service with speeds far higher than a conventional modem. It's expected to cost around £50 a month, which includes the price of a cable modem.
www.telewest.co.uk

Sharpshooters

Any thoughts you had about digital cameras not being up to the job can be banished forever – along with your processing bills

If you've got a PC and you're still paying for film developing, you really ought to consider going high-tech. Snag yourself a digital camera and you can take as many photos as you want – and never have to pay Boots ever again.

The quality of digital cameras is now comparable to all but their most obscenely expensive 35mm equivalents. They come with zoom lenses, flashes, different light settings – everything you'd find on a good old Box Brownie. Everything, that is, except a hole to put the film into – instead you save your photos onto a standard floppy disk or memory card.

Once you've transferred your masterpieces onto your PC, you can retouch them using a moderately priced program such as Paintshop Pro – removing relatives from wedding photos, pasting people's heads onto other people's bodies, that sort of thing – then email them to friends and family or post them on the Net. You can even print your work out on photographic-quality paper at high resolution using a cheap colour inkjet. Kodak might not thank you for it, but your bank manager will.

All the cameras here are available at these prices from your nearest PC World store. You can check out the store-finder at **www.pcworld.co.uk** or ring the hotline on 08705 464464.

FUJI MX-2900 £599

Designed to look like a standard 35mm camera, the MX-2900 features a 2.3million pixel resolution for very crisp images. It has a 3x zoom (plus a 2x digital zoom) and can use optional 43mm filters and a 28mm wide-angle lens. There's a built-in flash, but it can use external flashes. You can adjust aperture settings, balance, exposure compensation, manual exposure and flash brightness, and it comes with a lithium-ion battery as well as an AC adapter.

KODAK DC240i £449

If you're an iMac owner, used to citrus computers and pastel peripherals, then this is for you. Available in the five iMac colours, the DC240i features a 1.3million pixel CCD chip, delivering pictures up to 1280x960 resolution through its 3x optical zoom lens. Mac and PC compatible, it boasts autoexposure and autofocus. It comes with built-in flash and self-timer and is powered by four AA batteries or an AC adapter. There's a neat full-colour-border mode, plus sepia or B&W options. Retro and high-tech all in one.

KODAK DC215 £249

If you want to experiment with a digital camera, this £250 model might well be the best way forward. The DC215 looks very similar to a standard camera (complete with a fashionable metallic finish), but includes such higher-end features as a 2x optical zoom.

The core of the DC215 is a 1.1million pixel CCD chip, which can serve up images up to 1152x864 pixels. It has a built-in flash and adjustable aperture and shutter speed. It is both Mac and PC compatible and is powered by 4 AA batteries or from an AC adapter.

WORDS: ANDY HUTCHINSON; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT

EPSON PHOTOPC 850Z £629.99

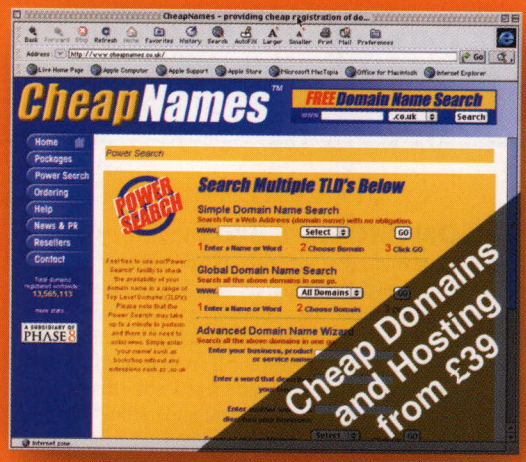
It might be mid-price, but Epson is aiming squarely at the more serious end of the market with this. It has a 2.11million pixel CCD chip, while the 3x optical zoom lens (which can be swapped) produces images as large as 1984x1488 pixels. It comes with a USB port, meaning it's a snap to connect to a PC or a Mac, and boasts fast transfer speeds. There's a voice recorder, enabling you to record up to ten seconds of speech with every photo, and a solar-powered LCD screen, which saves battery life. Highly recommended for advanced users, while suitable for newbies.

KODAK DC290 ZOOM £699

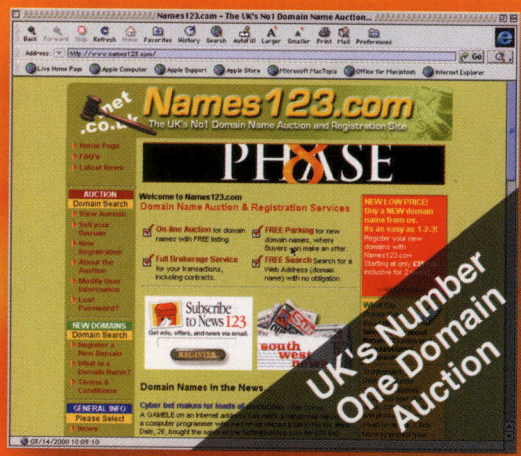
Crammed with features that will appeal to the serious photographer, most notably a high-resolution 3.3million pixel CCD chip. The DC290 comes with a built-in LCD display and a 3x optical zoom lens. It has the usual 'auto' features but can be used in manual mode, too. It includes fast frame setting (up to three frames per second), time-lapse, self-timer, flash and audio record and playback.

NIKON COOLPIX 950 £799

Nestling comfortably in the 'serious' end of the market, this comes from one of the biggest names in the business. Nikon has responded to complaints about poor image quality witha model which, it claims, can produced prints as big as 11 x 14 inches. You can check on your images on the built-in 2-inch LCD display, before saving them as TIFFs or JPEGs. The Nikon uses a 3x optical zoom autofocus lens, meaning you always get crisp images. Our favourite feature, however, is high-speed shooting, which enables you to fire off up to two frames per second. Those images are saved to 8Mb CompactFlash memory cards, which can hold up to 200 pictures.



www.cheapnames.co.uk



www.names123.com

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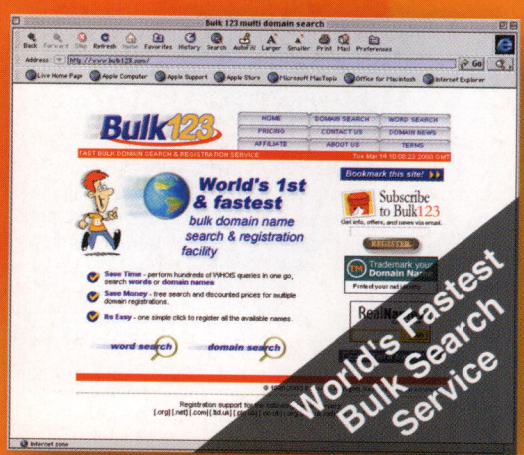

www.bulk123.com

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OLYMPUS C920 ZOOM £399

If £600 is just too much for a digital camera, then this model's an excellent option. Olympus has been producing high-quality digital cameras since they first appeared, and this model reflects that experience. The core of the C920 is 1.31million pixel CCD chip, backed up by a 3x zoom lens. The camera comes with its own built-in LCD screen, so you can check image quality before deciding to keep it. It also works with the newer 64Mb SmartMedia cards, which means you can store hundreds of pictures at a time.

SONY MAVICA MVCFD88 £699

One of the biggest names in camcorders is also firmly established in the digital stills market; Sony's Mavica range has proved a popular mid-range choice for some years now. The FD88 is extremely funky for one good reason – instead of expensive memory cards, it saves its images on standard floppy disks: very cheap and surprisingly capacious.

The Mavica has a 2.5-inch LCD display and utilises a high resolution 1/3.6 inch CCD imaging chip. It has a 16x digital zoom and is capable of producing images at resolutions as high as 1280x960. It comes with a full range of PC connectivity software, including great transfer software, and is both PC and Mac compatible.

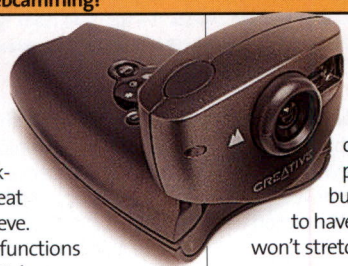
WEBCAM UPDATE What's new in the world of Webcamming?

KODAK DVC325 WEBCAM £99

Kodak's latest offers 640x480 resolution, which should be perfectly high enough for most home uses and family teleconferencing. The only downside is manual focus – but if you're going to train it on your ugly gob all day, you'll only need to focus it the once.

CREATIVE WEBCAM GO £119

More expensive than the Kodak but packing plenty of neat tricks up its sleeve. On one level it functions as a standard Webcam, serving up 640x480 resolutions via a three-state (infinity, mid-range or close-up) lens. However, it's not tied to your desktop: flip the stand back into the unit and it becomes a hand-held camera. The image quality can't compare with purpose-built cameras, but it's a handy feature to have when your USB lead won't stretch into the garden.



3COM PC DIGITAL WEBCAM £129

A chunky but well-featured model utilising a USB interface for fast, crisp images at resolutions as high as 1280x960. It's an autofocus, with low light sensitivity settings for those dingy offices, and even boasts a swappable lens design. It comes with PC software (including a TWAIN driver) and functions in a variety of colour or monochrome settings.

'Give me some space, man!'

Chances are, your ISP has handed you a bucketful of your very own free Web space. So what are you going to do with it?

You get more than just access to the Net when you sign up with an Internet Service Provider these days. Most ISPs also provide subscribers with a certain amount of free Web space on their servers – which means there's typically between 5Mb and 20Mb worth of storage with your name written on it. You'll need to contact your ISP to find out exactly how much space is available to you, and if 20Mb worth of storage isn't enough, you can often increase this amount for a small charge or by taking out a different type of account with your ISP.

The general idea is that this space is to be used for the creation and storage of your own Web pages, but this isn't the only thing you can do with it. After all, space on a server is just like the space on your PC or Mac's hard disk...

THE WORLD WIDE ZIP

One very useful option is simply to use this space as an emergency backup for important files. Many people keep backup copies on removable media like Zip disks, which is fine for restoring data should your computer's hard disk manage to trash your precious files.

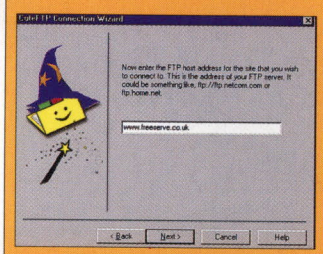
But what if someone were to break in and steal your computer – plus anything else that wasn't nailed down, like your Zip drive and disks? You'd be up the proverbial creek without a paddle...

Using your ISP's server as a remote backup can prevent something like this happening. Thieves can steal disks, drives and monitors, but they can't steal the Internet. Once that nice insurance company has supplied you with a new computer, you can download those files from your ISP's server and you're back in business. And remember: the Net is a big place and no-one will be able to find your files unless you tell them exactly where they're stored – so there's little chance of anyone else getting hold of private information without permission.

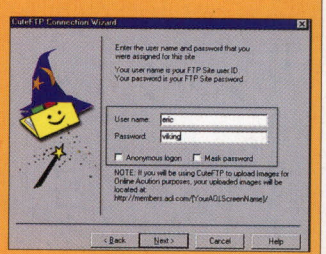
In addition, the ability to download stored files from the Internet can be really useful when you're travelling. Just upload data to your ISP's server before you leave home, then retrieve it from a cybercafé or by using a friend's computer when you eventually reach your destination. This is handy even if you're travelling with a laptop, because you can use your free Web space as a worldwide storage and backup device that will follow you around the planet – useful.

CUTE FTP STEP-BY-STEP

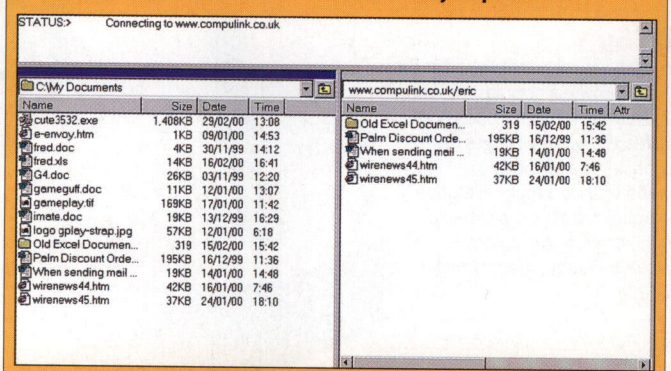
Wherever you get your free space from, and whatever you want to put up there, the basic process of uploading files or Web pages remains the same. You need to use a process known as FTP – file transfer protocol. This can be a little bit fiddly, but there are a bunch of good FTP programs, such as the popular CuteFTP, that you can download from the Net for free.



1 Before you'll be able to use CuteFTP, you'll need to contact your ISP to obtain a few details, such as the name of its FTP server.



2 Next, enter the name and password you normally use with your ISP account. This will take you to the area on the ISP's server that is for your personal use.



3 On the left of the screen, CuteFTP shows you the contents of your own hard disk so that you can choose the files you want to upload. The right-hand side of the screen lists the files that you've uploaded to your free Web space.

WORDS: CLIFF JOSEPH; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY

Using Web space

Henry and his secretary couldn't get enough of *the net*

Thieves might be able to steal disk drives, but they can't nick the Web

PHOTOS ONLINE

Of course, backing-up precious documents isn't all you can do with your Web space. You can also let other people view or download your stored files simply by giving them the necessary URL (unique resource locator) – the Internet address that specifies the location of the files.

One option that's starting to become really popular is putting photos online. If you've got a digital camera you can upload a series of snaps and create your very own online gallery. Best of all, you don't need a degree in programming to design Web pages to display the pictures; many digital cameras and scanners now come with programs such as PhotoSoap or Media Centre that will automatically create a gallery for you. Just put all the pictures into a folder on your computer's hard disk and these programs will automatically create a Web page with thumbnail views of all your pictures, along with the links required to download or view the full-size images.

Although online photography is becoming big business, don't panic if your ISP doesn't let you have free Web space. Traditional photographic companies such as Kodak are trying to get a foot in the digital door with online galleries that are open to anyone. There are also photographic services, such as Club Photo, that allow you to store your pictures

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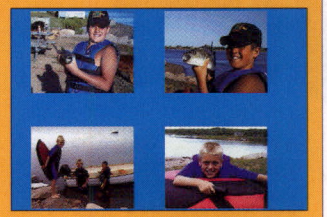
PLACES FOR FREE SPACE Or, how to show the world your photographs

Programs such as Soap, which is bundled with a lot of digital cameras and scanners, can automatically create an online photo-gallery that you can upload to your free Web space.



If your ISP doesn't give free space, sites like Club Photo allow you to upload pictures or other files free.

All Mac users get 20Mb of free Web space on Apple's new iTools Web site.

online for free, but will charge for printing and other services.

Pictures aren't the only files you can put up on the Net – you can upload music and video clips, or create a calendar so that people can find out where you are and what you're up to. You could even design a shared calendar, so that you and a group of friends or colleagues can keep track of each other. You'll need a calendar program designed for network use; if you haven't got one, go to a site such as Yahoo!, which offers a free calendar feature that can be used by anyone.

If your ISP doesn't offer you enough free Web space, find a site that does

Other good sites for this kind of activity include eCircles and Tripod, which both specialise in creating online communities. Registration at eCircles is free, although you'll need to set up a password and enter a few details such as your email address and country of residence. Once you've registered, you can create your very own eCircle by inviting friends, family or colleagues to join the circle. Web space is also available, so you can upload files that you want to share with other people, as well as create online photo galleries using the eCircle software. The company also allows you to create a group calendar that can be used by all the members of your circle, or even to create online chat rooms open only to other eCircle members.

Tripod is Europe's largest home-page builder and online community, with a million members. It consists of communities of interests, called 'Pods'. Once you've registered as a Tripodian, you can use the company's software to design your own Web page. There's 12Mb of free Web space waiting, and an online assistant to take care of the set-up.

THE SPACE SPECIALISTS

If your ISP doesn't let you have any free Web space, find somewhere that does. Some of these sites are quite specialised, such as StangNet, which caters for obsessive Ford Mustang fans who want to upload pictures of their cars. Music fans should take a look at Get In Your Crib, which provides free Web space with the sole condition that you do something music-related with it. And for Mac users, Apple recently launched a service called iTools, which allows any Mac user to get their hands on 20Mb of free Web space, as well as other services such as free email, templates for designing your own Web page and electronic greeting cards.

If you're not a musical, Mustang-driving Mac user, you can find out about other sources of free Web space from the list compiled by Freeservers.com. Just remember that free Web space is like the space on your own hard disk, so you'll be able to store any kind of file that you could keep on your own computer. But be warned: make sure that you aren't using more space than your allotted amount. Some ISPs won't bother to warn you when you go over your limit, and will simply charge you for the extra space automatically. Your ISP may also have 'acceptable use' rules about the kind of stuff that they will allow you to store. So first of all, make sure you check with your ISP to find out how much space is available – and what you're allowed to do with it – before you start taking advantage of this electronic storage cupboard in the sky. Then, simply let your imagination run riot.

Useful Web sites

CUTEFTP
www.CuteFTP.com
ECIRCLES
www.ecircles.com
TRIPOD
www.tripod.co.uk
FREESERVERS LIST
freeweblist.freeservers.com
GET IN YOUR CRIB
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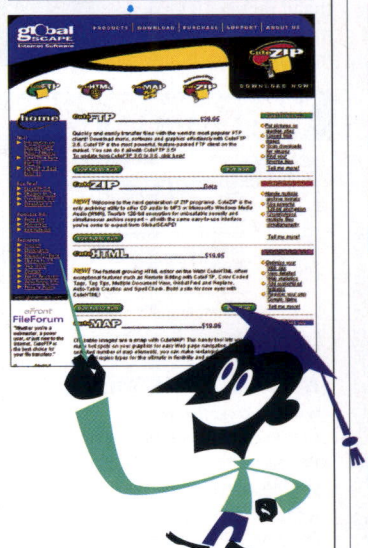


Can you hear me, mother?

Talk to every nation under the sun for the cost of a local phone call – thanks to the Net

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT USING your computer as a telephone? Simple. It means no more long-distance call charges. You can chat to your family Down Under for the cost of a local call. In fact, as telcos like BT and the big cable companies look set to introduce flat-rate Net charges, there has never been a better time for Web telephony.

To use the recent Alta Vista offer as an example, you'd simply pay a joining fee of £30, then an annual charge of a tenner for all your Web calls. And that's it. Using Web telephony, that would be your phone bill *for the entire year*. You're laughing all the way to the bank.

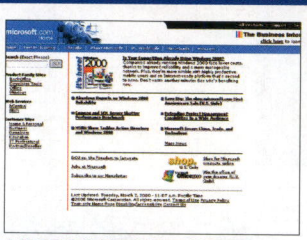
WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Web telephony is far from perfect from a quality point of view, but given the compelling financial arguments and the fact that it requires little or no more equipment than most home users already have, there's every reason to give it a go. Leaving aside the potential for videoconferencing (for which you will need a Webcam and video-conferencing software), the needs of telephony on the Net are humble indeed. Chances are that if you've bought your computer in the last two years then it's more than ready to party, with a sound card already installed. Any sound card will do, but if you're buying one for the purpose then make sure it is what's called a 'full-duplex' card.

The needs of Web telephony are small – chances are your PC's ready to party

With these cards in your PC and that of the person you are talking to, you'll be able to listen and talk at the same time, just like a standard telephone call. If either of you only has a half-duplex sound card you won't have true two-way talk – you'll have to stop and let the other person know it's their turn, just like using a walkie-talkie. The end result tends to become irresistibly comic, as few of us can resist slipping in the

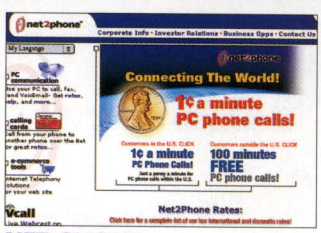
WHERE TO DOWNLOAD PHONE SOFTWARE



MICROSOFT NETMEETING

www.microsoft.com

Leader of the Web phone pack. Renowned for its audio clarity, simple interface and 'whiteboard' for business users to share ideas. Requires a Hotmail account.



NET2PHONE

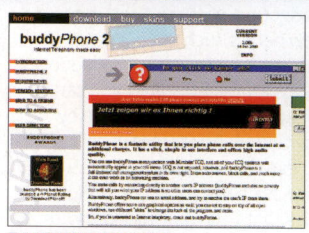
www.net2phone.com

Great idea, using the Net to dial your bog-standard blower with cheap rates. Sadly, poor execution means that in Web mode it only connects with other Net2Phone users.

VOCALTEC NET PHONE

www.vocaltec.com

Notable for its 'Community Browser', which serves as a meeting point for online chat. There are Public and Member rooms divided into different categories.



BUDDYPHONE

www.buddyphone.com

Connects to fellow gossips on an ICQ list but lacks the audio set-up wizard of other packages. Not great audio quality and only connects to other BuddyPhone users.

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY, KOBAL

Once the sub left port, Captain Smythe let his hair down

phrases 'roger' and 'over' – and before you know it normally sensible people are calling each other 'Ginger' and 'Squiffy', blathering on about 'cabbage-crates over the briney'.

Full- or half-duplex, you'll need a microphone to make yourselves heard. While there are cheap 'stick' mics included in many PC bundles, using them might make you feel like a taxi dispatcher, so you may want to think about investing in a phone-style handset. Apart from that, all you need is the software...

Bear in mind that the higher the bandwidth the better the banter

GET RABBITING

Setting up the software is a doddle. Microsoft NetMeeting, for example (now included free with Windows 2000), is fairly typical, in that a set-up 'wizard' guides you through the process of picking a default directory server and tuning your sound hardware for speaking and listening. Then it attempts to hook you up so you can place your call. You'll need the email address of the person you want to talk to and you'll both need to be logged on at the same time – so unless your mates spend the entire waking day logged onto the Internet, you'll need to arrange a time in advance.

For most Internet phone software packages you'll both need to have the same software, but this is rarely a problem since trial versions of at least half a dozen packages can be downloaded from shareware sites (such as ***www.shareware.com***). Even the cost of the full-featured versions is rarely extortionate – VocalTec's Internet Phone (***www.vocaltec.com***), for example, costs less than $50.

If you really do have time on your hands you can also use Web telephony as a chatline – all the people on a server are listed as if in a phonebook, and setting up chatrooms is easy. If you're not paying for the call then this could be a low-cost option for weaning chatline junkies off 0898 numbers.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

In terms of speed, a 28.8K modem connection will do – or so the software suppliers tell us. However, the higher the bandwidth the better the banter, so as with everything to do with the Net if you can get your mitts on broadband (see the panel on ADSL), you'll reap the benefits. Bear in mind that even with broadband access you'll be lucky to get the quality you expect from your phone; chances are you'll get a slight lag on the line, like in the bad old days of transatlantic telephony. Just keep telling yourself: 'It's one pence per minute. It's one pence per minute.' If the lag is annoying enough to kill the conversation then disconnect and try again, or go back to the manual/shriek at the supplier for tips on fine-tuning the software.

One word of warning, though – Web telephony is straightforward enough for most home users but corporate firewalls play hell with the set-up routines. If you want to Webphone-enable your company, check very carefully with the software suppliers that everything's going to work.

Chances are, the hardware will require reconfiguring, and not all firewall suppliers support all phone software. But if you have, say, another branch or a business partner in a far-flung country, it may well be worth the hassle just to get the savings.

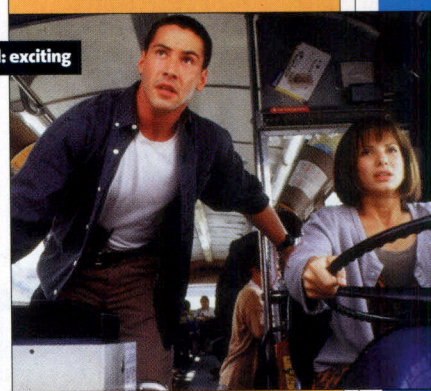
A TELEPHONY REVOLUTION BEGINS HERE

Faster than a speeding 56k modem – it's ADSL!

Imagine that you've set up your Web telephony so you don't have to pay long-distance charges when phoning from your computer. Now imagine you've got a fancy phone line that can transport data at least ten times faster than a 56K modem, cutting out that radio-style time-lag when making calls. Imagine a system that's 'permanently open', so that calls are unlimited.

That's what ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) offers. After years of delay, BT is committed to rolling it out across the nation. It involves a special kind of modem at your end, plus a modification to the telephone exchange, but in between it uses bog-standard copper telephone wire. Yes – if you've got a phone you can have ADSL, without having your garden dug up.

The way it works is to squeeze compressed data down the line at a frequency higher than normal voice traffic, which won't even interfere with a voice call being made over the same line at the same time. BT's quandary has been that ADSL makes its more lucrative products such as ISDN and leased lines redundant, and being 'permanently on' it raises the spectre that a nation switching to Web telephony would never pay for individual phone calls again. Still, with the pressure from telecoms watchdog Oftel and Gordon Brown, BT has no option but to bite the bullet and wire us all up.



Speed: exciting

Web browsers

The browser is your window to the Web – so use it to the full. And, in case you didn't know, there are alternatives to Navigator and Explorer

What do I use to explore the Web?

The software you use to look at pages on the Web is called a 'browser'. The most popular are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. If you have a PC running Windows 95 or 98, you will almost certainly have Internet Explorer already installed. However, Navigator and other browsers such as Opera run in much the same way.

What are my options?

Statistically, Internet Explorer is the most popular browser on the planet. Together with its nearest competitor, Netscape Navigator, it accounts for 97 percent of all Web page hits.

With the facilities that the two offer, it's hardly surprising that they rule the roost. Internet Explorer 5.0 is the current leader of the Internet pack. It's packed – jam-packed, in fact – with features.

Netscape Navigator 4.08 represents the only serious competition to Internet Explorer. But it still can't reach the dizzying heights of IE – in fact it's slipped so much in popularity that Web site designers now often make sure their pages look right in IE alone.

You would've thought that with the market pretty much sewn up between the big two, no-one would be foolhardy enough to attempt to write a rival browser – but there are others. Opera, for example, is a tiny little thing at 1.5Mb (compared with Netscape Communicator's 10Mb+). It's fast, but it's let down by an ugly appearance. The Opera equivalent for Macs is iCab. It has many of the excellent features of Opera, but it looks and works even better.

If you want a real rebel browser, try Lynx. It's text only, so it cuts down on download times. For children (or adults who are kids at heart), there's Surf Monkey, which lets you blow up Web pages you don't like, or gloop green paint all over them.

Saving sites in Internet Explorer

Typing in the name of a Web site every time you want to visit it can be a pain – especially if it's a long and complex name. Fortunately, all Web browsers have a way of saving the locations of sites you like, so you can revisit them without needing to retype them. In Internet Explorer these saved site addresses are called Favourites, while Netscape Navigator calls them Bookmarks.

1 From the Favourites menu, choose 'Add to Favourite.' The keyboard shortcut for the move is Control D.

2 When asked whether you want to subscribe to the site, choose the 'No, just add this page to my Favourites' option. You'll see the title of the page in the 'Name' section of the site; if this is not descriptive enough for you, type a five- or six-word description of the site. Then hit OK.

3 You will now find that the site has been added to your Favourites menu. To visit the site, just click 'Favourites' and then go to the menu list and select it.

Supercharge your browser

Your basic Internet Explorer set-up comes with several 'plug-ins'. These are additional pieces of software which enable your browser to play, for example, multimedia effects. If you arrive at a site requiring a plug-in that you don't have, you'll be prompted to download and install it. The plug-ins you'll need to get the most from your browsing include: RealPlayer at ***www.real.com*** (bottom), which lets you watch videos or listen to music; Shockwave at ***www.shockwave.com*** (below), for animation and sound; and Apple's QuickTime at ***www.apple.com/quicktime/***, which plays video and sound.

Installing a plug-in

1 When you require a plug-in, a prompt appears. Click 'Get Plug-in' and you'll go to the plug-in's home page.

2 Click on the link where you can 'Get' or 'Download' the plug-in.

3 Explorer will put the plug-in inside the correct folder on your PC.

4 Go back to the site by pressing the Back button on the Explorer toolbar and enjoy it in its full glory.

Browser alternatives

Proof that there's more to browsing than Explorer or Netscape

MAC BROWSERS

BROWSER	RATING	FOR	AGAINST	DOWNLOAD FROM
ICAB	★★★★	Fast. Gets rid of irritating ad banners	Could support more features	www.icab.de
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow; somewhat unstable	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★	State-of-the-art browsing on the Mac	Can be memory-hungry	www.microsoft.com/Mac/IE/
LYNX	★★★★	Blazingly fast at fact-finding	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx/
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★	It's almost as good as IE...	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com

PC BROWSERS

AMAYA	★★	Great for those into Net standards...	...not for those who aren't	www.w3.org/Amaya/User/BinDist.html
ARACHNE	★★	It runs in DOS and is written by Czechs	A pain to set up	arachne.cz
CUSTOM BROWSER	★	Adds minimal extra customisation to IE	It's just IE with an ad in the top panel	www.custombrowser.com
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow, though not as bad as on the Mac	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★★	For the moment, the king of all browsers	Hard to fault, unless you really try	www.microsoft.com
LYNX	★★★★	The original text-only browser	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	lynx.browser.org
MOSAIC	★★★	Good for developers	Feels old. Is old. Not updated since 1996	www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/mosaic-w/
NEOPLANET	★★★★	Funky interface replacement for Explorer	Internet Explorer in new clothes	www.neoplanet.com
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★★	Wide range of features for hardcore users	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com
OPERA	★★★★	Faster than IE or Netscape	Looks absolutely horrible	www.opera.com
SURF MONKEY	★★★★★	Lots of fun – blowing up sites is great	Designed for smaller screens?	www.surfmonkey.com

*free 30-day trial version available

What all those browser buttons mean

Understanding the toolbar

BACK Clicking this button takes you back to the last page. Click it once and you'll go back one page, or hold to see the last 10

STOP If you decide that you don't want to view a page while it's loading, just hit Stop

HOME This button takes you to the page you viewed when you started your browser

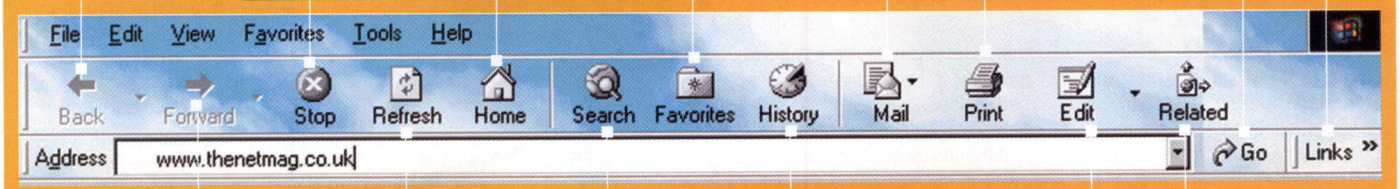
FAVOURITES Pop-up window containing a list of your Favourite sites – or you can view them from the menu

MAIL Opens your email program

PRINT Prints the page

GO When you've entered an address, hit Enter or click here to go to the site

LINKS A quick shortcut to some of your favourite sites, which you can add to



FORWARD If you've used the Back button to move back a page or two, the Forward button should take you back again

REFRESH This makes the browser redraw the page on the screen – useful if you have stopped a page from loading

SEARCH This button opens Internet Explorer's search options where you'll find short-cuts to finding what you want on the Internet

HISTORY Clicking this button produces a list of all the sites visited over the past few days or weeks – so if you found a really useful page two days ago but forgot to add it to your Favourites list, you can easily find it again by looking here

EDIT If you have a Web page editor, you can edit a Web page by clicking here

RELATED SITES Launches the Explorer 'Alexa' plug-in which provides extra search options

Viewing your browser

1 TITLE BAR Tells you the name of the site you're visiting and the program you're currently using

2 MENU BAR The range of options you can use while navigating the Internet

3 IE LOGO Contains a link to the IE home page, in case you're lost

4 ADDRESS The address of the site you're opening, including the http:// prefix

5 GO BUTTON Click to go to the address you've typed in (or hit the Return key)

6 WEB SITE WINDOW The whole page you're opening

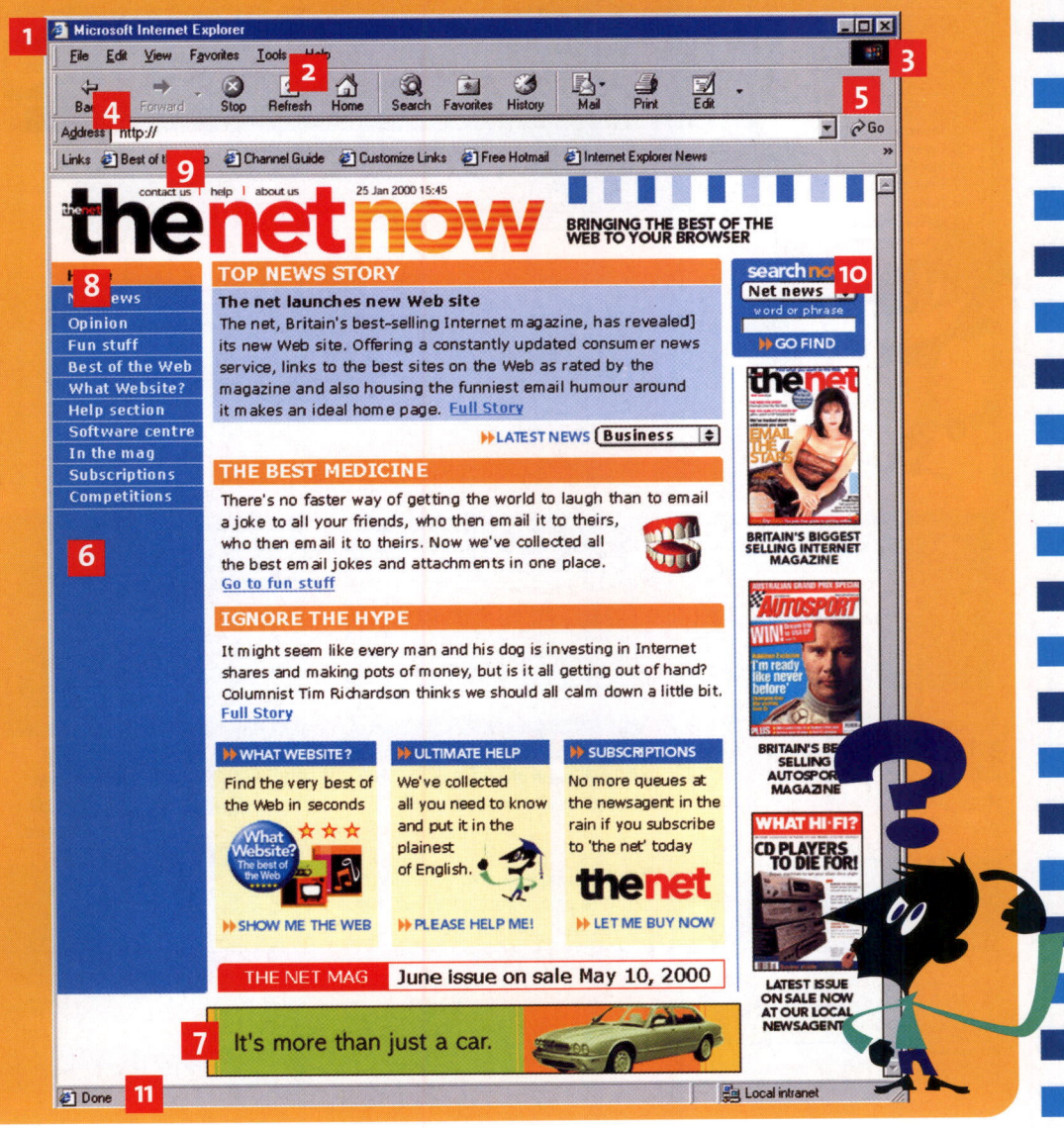
7 BANNER ADVERTISEMENT Click here to visit the service advertised in this small banner

8 INDEX What you'll find on the site. Click on an option to enter it

9 TEXT LINKS Move your cursor to the underlined text and you'll be able to open the relevant link by clicking on it

10 SEARCH Will find something specific on the site for you

11 DOWNLOAD DATA This space tells you what Explorer is doing – or which site it could open when your cursor passes over a link



Email

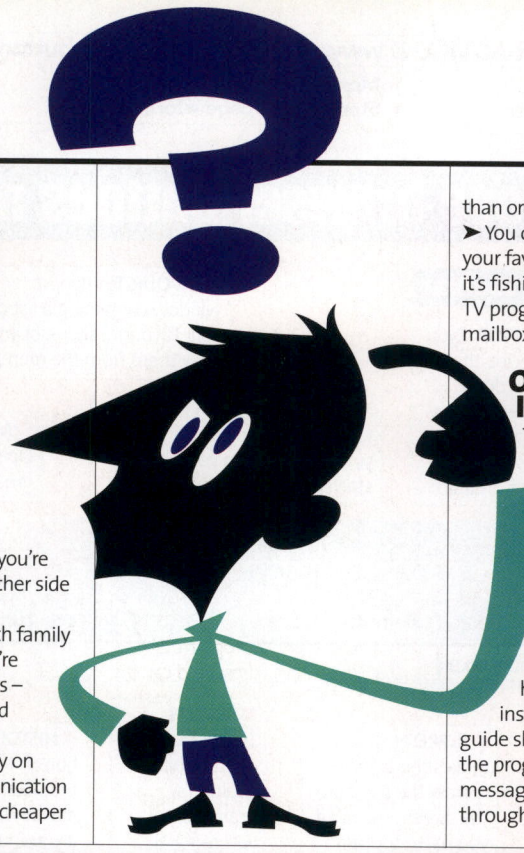
Having trouble setting up your email? Follow our guide to Outlook Express

What is email?

Email is a way of sending messages around the Internet. While early programs could only handle plain text, most can now carry pictures and even video clips and sound.

So why should I use it?

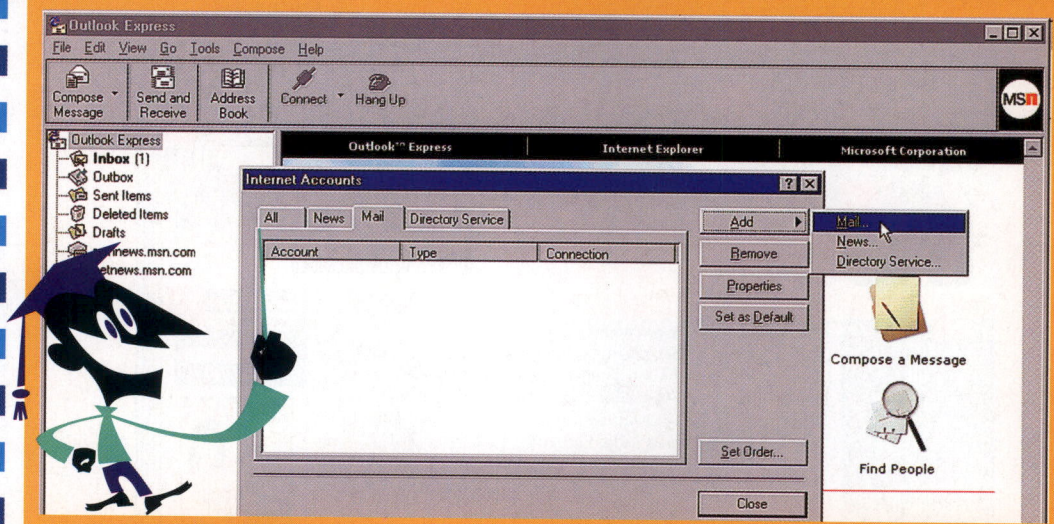
➤ It's a lot cheaper to email a friend than to phone them long distance.
➤ It's delivered almost instantly – there's no seven-day wait if you're emailing someone on the other side of the globe.
➤ You can keep in touch with family and friends, even while they're away on business or holidays – they can visit a cybercafé and check their mail from there.
➤ Many companies now rely on email as a means of communication because it's much faster and cheaper than ordinary or 'snail mail'.
➤ You can have information on your favourite subjects – whether it's fishing, the stock market, or a TV programme – delivered to your mailbox every day.



Okay, so how do I use it?

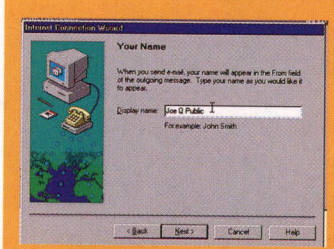
There are lots of email packages, but the one most widely used is Microsoft's Outlook Express. If you've bought a PC in the last two or three years, or you've downloaded Microsoft Internet Explorer for either Mac or PC, you'll already have Outlook Express installed. Our step-by-step guide shows you how to configure the program, create an email message, send it, and then read through the mail you've been sent.

1 Getting started with Outlook Express

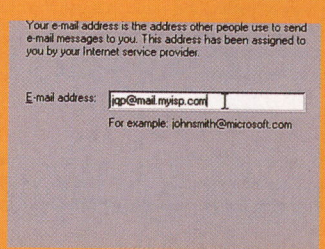


1 From the Start menu on your desktop, click Programs and then Outlook Express. If you are asked where you want it to store messages, select the pre-set or 'default' folder. The folder is kept in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

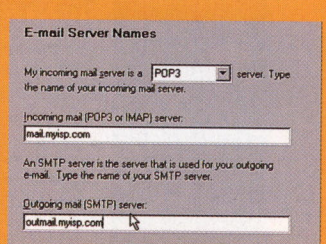
2 Once Outlook Express has loaded, go to the Accounts box from the Tools menu, and click the Mail tab shown in the picture on the left. This will show you any mail accounts you already have set up, and allows you to create a new one. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to create a new email account. Next, click Add, and select Mail.



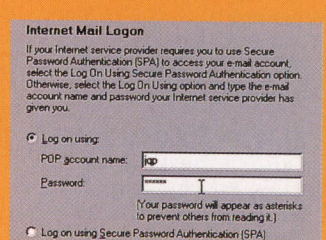
3 The Internet Connection Wizard will now guide you through the steps you need to take. First, enter your full name.



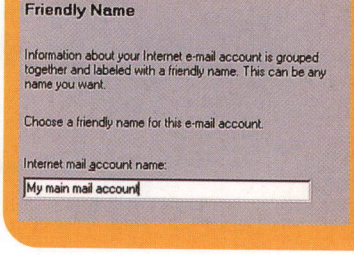
4 Type in your email address. This will have been given to you by your Internet service provider or ISP.



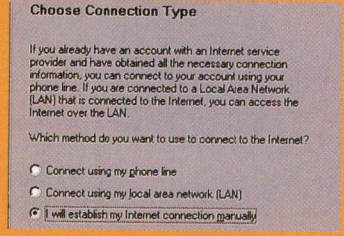
5 Enter the names of the email POP3/IMAP server in order to get incoming and outgoing mail. Call your ISP's helpline if you're unsure.



6 Type in your email address – just the part before the '@' sign – and your password. Again, your ISP should have given you these details.



7 Outlook Express asks for a 'friendly name' to give to your email account. We've called ours 'My main email account' for simplicity.



8 Outlook Express can automatically dial into your ISP for you, but it's probably best to connect manually. You can use Outlook offline, writing and managing your mail and then connect in order to send and receive messages. Choose the 'I will establish my Internet connection manually' option.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Creating an email address book
- ★ Email etiquette
- ★ Filtering your email messages
- ★ Sending pictures and files via email

BEGINNER'S TIP

Add a 'signature' to your messages. A signature is like a calling card appended to the bottom of your email message. It might contain your email address, full name and phone number. To make one, go to the Tools menu in Outlook Express, choose Options and select Stationery and click on the Signature button. Type in the signature text you want to appear at the bottom of each message.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Often, you'll want to pass a file to someone as part of your email message. This is known as 'attaching' the file, and is supported by most email packages. Remember that a large file will take longer to send. Compressing it using a shareware package like WinZip on the PC will shrink it, but the receiver the file will need a copy of the same program to re-expand it – so check before you send.

ADVANCED TIP

You can set up several different email accounts. Outlook Express will check each one for new mail when you go online. This is useful if you have separate work and personal email accounts. To add extra accounts, go to the Tools menu, select Options and click on New Account. Go through the 'Getting Started' steps again below, entering the new settings.

EMAIL OPTIONS If you don't want to use Outlook Express, try these alternatives for size

EUDORA LIGHT

www.eudora.com

A very popular, free email package. Includes lots of great features. Doesn't support reading news-groups, but copes happily with 'rich content email' – mail that includes sound, images and so on.

✔ **Lots of features**

✘ **None**

HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

A Web-based email program. Gives you a free email address, and can be accessed from any computer with a Web browser. Can also check email from a non-Web-based account.

✔ **Accessed from any computer**

✘ **You need to be online to read or compose mail**

EUDORA PRO 4.0

www.eudora.com

Commercial bigger brother to Eudora Light. Has all the features of Lite, but also allows you to check your mail from several different accounts easily.

✔ **Supports multiple mailboxes, spellchacker, email filtering**

✘ **It'll set you back nearly £30**

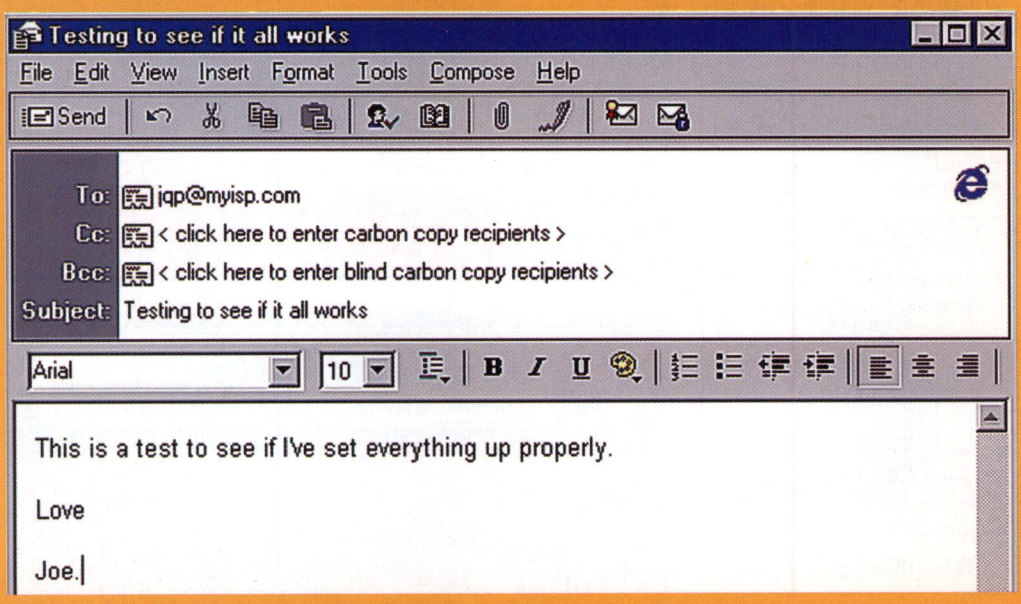
OUTLOOK 98

www.microsoft.com Commercial bigger brother to Outlook Express. Includes an address book, to-do list and calendar, all of which link very elegantly in to the email section of the program.

✔ **Integrates well with address book, diary and scheduler**

✘ **It'll set you back around £125**

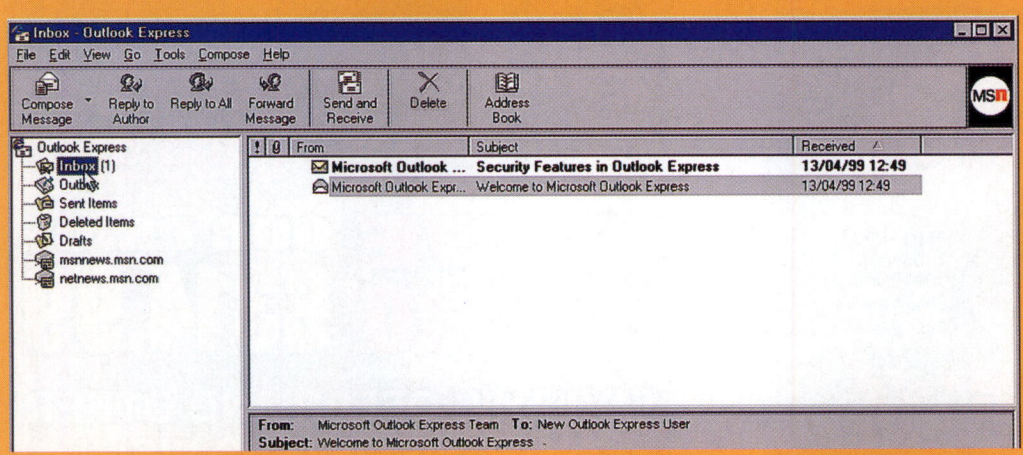
2 Composing your first email message



COMPOSING A MESSAGE

To create a message, click 'Compose Message'. If you click the small arrow just to the right, you will see that there are several pre-defined graphic message templates. But for now, just click on the button itself. Type your own email address in the 'To' field – you'll send an email to yourself to check that everything is working correctly. Enter a subject, for example 'Test Message', and in the body area just type a short message. From the File menu you can click Send to send your message now if you're online. Alternatively, if you're working offline click Send Later. This allows you to create more messages and have them ready for sending when you're ready to log on to the Net.

3 Sending, receiving & reading email



SENDING & RECEIVING MAIL

To send and receive mail, connect to the Net, then click the Send and Receive button. This will check for mail and download any new messages, at the same time sending any outgoing messages you have created. Once the program has stopped receiving mail, you can disconnect from the Net if you wish, to save phone costs. Click on In Box to the left of the screen to access the messages you have received. Click on the message to read its contents.

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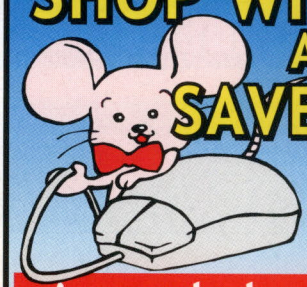

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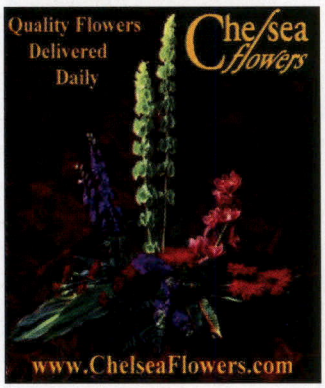

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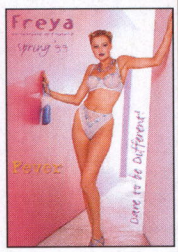

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LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO

The rugby star on how the Net has taken over from Ceefax when it comes to team selection

PICTURE: EMPICS

How long have you been online?
Since the summer of '98, when Clive Woodward, the England coach, arranged for us all to have a laptop. Since then I've become more organised. I've had a desktop PC for a few years, but because I'm out quite a lot and away for long periods I never seemed to use it that much. Now I use the laptop for letters, as well as answering questions like these! I also play the odd game here and there.

Have you ever considered having your own site?
Yes, I'm currently looking at developing a site for myself. My team, Wasps, has a site (***www.wasps.co.uk***), and I think it's extremely important for clubs to have a presence on the Net – after all, you're reaching a potential worldwide audience. That can only help to increase awareness about the game.

Clive Woodward uses email to tell players if they've been selected. What's wrong with meeting them?
I suppose some people might think it slightly strange that Clive informs people of their inclusion in the squad by email, but he's only taking advantage of the technology on offer. Previously, we had to read of our selection on Ceefax. The actual team is announced at a meeting in the week prior to an international.

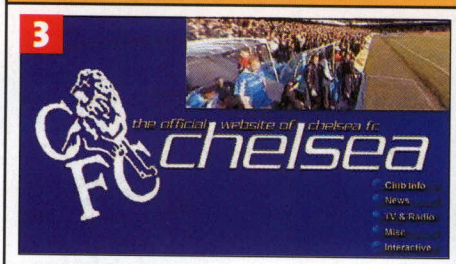
Did the team have to be taught to use email when Woodward started?
Some of us already knew how to use email and log onto the Net, but the technical staff at Twickenham were on hand to give lessons for anyone who required them.

What do you think of rugby coverage on the Net?
There's reasonably good coverage of the sport, but there's always room for a few more thousand sites. I could suggest some...

Do you use the Net to research opposing teams, or do you know them all too well already?
At this stage, the Net doesn't feature in our study of opponents. It tends to be done by analysis of video. You can never know your oppo too well, as they will always be trying new things to get an edge over you.

Even if England wins the Six Nations, can it ever make up for the team's failure in the World Cup?
The World Cup was very disappointing, that's been well documented, but we have to move on and look forward. It would be great to win the Six Nations, but ultimately the goal must be the World Cup!

LAWRENCE'S BEST OF THE WEB



1 SPORTING BET
www.sportingbet.com
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2 SCRUM
www.scrum.com
I enjoy browsing this site for obvious reasons. It has, I believe, the best coverage and range of the world of rugby.

3 OFFICIAL CHELSEA WEBSITE
www.chelseafc.co.uk
Chelsea is my favourite football team and their official site is very comprehensive. I like to keep up with what's going on at the club as I don't get to see as many live games as I would like.

4 YAHOO! FINANCE
www.finance.uk.yahoo.com
Through Yahoo! I'm able to keep up-to-date with the very latest share prices – including Sportingbet.com.

5 BBC TWEENIES
www.bbc.co.uk/education/tweenies
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Lawrence Dallaglio writes on rugby for Sportingbet.com

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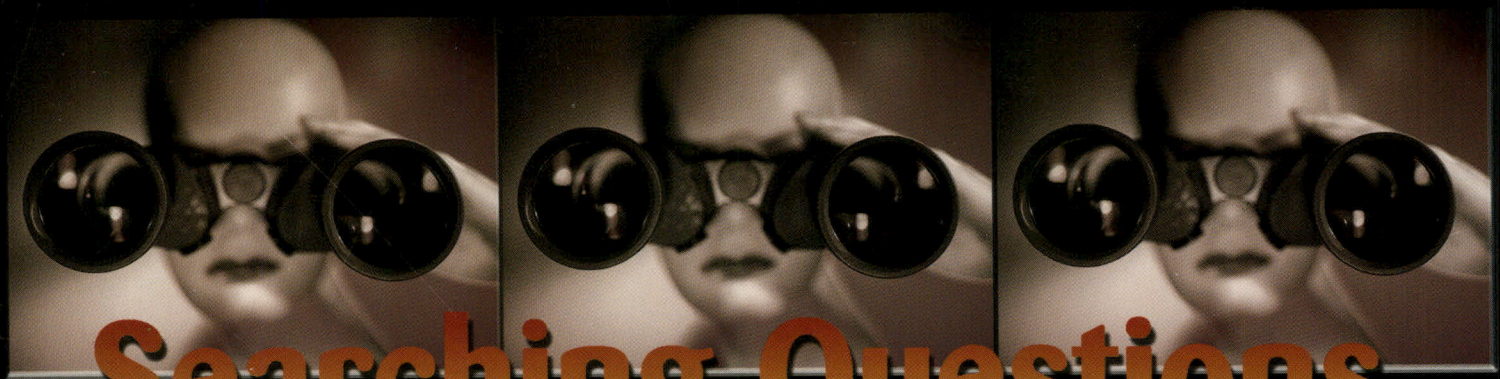

Searching Questions

Where can I find up to date search results with high UK relevance?

Which Search Engine understands Natural Language Questions as well as Advanced Queries?

Where can I search UK based .com, .net as well as .uk domains within one index?

Where can I sort results into 'authoritative' as well as 'link rich' and 'recent' order?

Where can Webmasters find out who links to pages within their site?

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